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Volume CLXVII No. 2182

The SPHERE, London, November 15, 1941

THE SPHERE

With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"

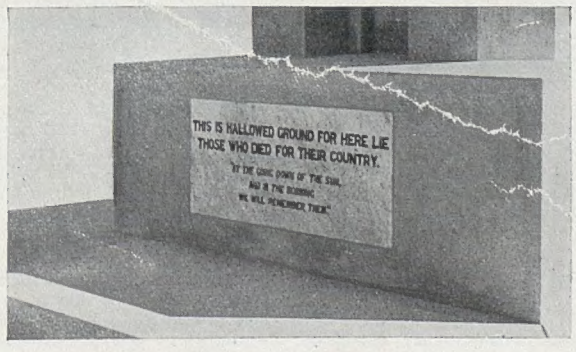
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

London, November 15, 1941

# TO THE HEROES OF TOBRUK

## A Memorial to the Men Who Have Given Their Lives in its Defence

*—Two official pictures*




This Memorial has been built by Royal Australian Engineers under shellfire and aerial bombardment at Tobruk. It is dedicated to those who have given their lives in the defence of this bastion of the Middle East. Recently the Memorial was unveiled by Major-General Morshead, the General Officer Commanding at Tobruk. Australian, British and Allied officers and men attended the ceremony. At its base is a simple inscription which states : "This is hallowed ground, for here lie those who died for their country. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them"

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# A WAR NEWSLETTER—No. 115

1, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1.

**What a Game!**—A pamphlet, printed in Glasgow and written by the Duke of Bedford, lies before me. In the first paragraph the Duke sets forth the logic of his creed: "Only last year the Prime Minister, speaking of the Finns and Russians, said: 'The service rendered by Finland to mankind is magnificent. They have exposed for all the world to see the military incapacity of the Red Army and the Red Air Force. Everyone can see how Communism rots the soul of a nation; how it makes it abject and hungry in peace and proves it base and abominable in war.' What a game! If our people had not lost their sense of humour as well as sense of every other description, surely they would now realise the utter absurdity and immorality of war, and insist on their Government exploring any and every reasonable way of bringing this lunacy to an end." Let us with courage and coolness examine this sentence, which, with others of the sort, has branded a man of ability, who is no fool and (I am convinced) no traitor, with infamy of late. **1.** Let us first frankly admit that, if it had been written in peacetime, its logic would have hit a great number of people; and Mr. Churchill himself, a zestful and large-minded and courageous parliamentarian, would probably have chuckled, perhaps ruefully, over "a very palpable hit." Anyway, it would not have branded the writer with infamy, and the proof that it *is* a logical hit lies in the attitude of the Premier towards Russia. Almost alone among his entourage of Ministers, he does not seek to eat his words. He admits the principle that a life-and-death dire necessity brings strange bedfellows. He exceptionally (unlike the Bishops and the Government and the great bulk of the nation) has not lost his sense of humour and proportion—even when he glorifies the efficiency of the Red Army and Air Force. **2.** Why should such an argument propounded in war be received as treachery, when in peace it would be received by many with chuckles, if not with approval? Because in total war for survival, there are (as I have said often) no shades of colour. Everything is either black or white. Yes, but are we not a democracy, flying the banner of freedom—of speech, of action, of opinion, and ready to die for that freedom? If war allows no right of compromise, why does Mr. Churchill frankly "compromise" with his bugbear, Communism? If ours is not to reason why, why do Mr. Churchill's henchmen and Parliament spend half their days in talk? These are not outrageous, oratorical questions. **3.** Where has the Duke gone wrong in setting forth his argument in wartime? It is a fact (which any searcher can verify for himself) that only last year the Premier said what he is quoted as saying concerning Communism. You cannot hang a man in war for quoting it. It is still true that probably a majority of the nation, while working all out for our war effort, *does* accept it that war is utterly imbecile and can settle nothing; that war, and night bombing, perhaps, *are* mass-madness, stark and immeasurable, and that while they last every day brings civilisation nearer to the crater's edge.

## Elements of Truth.—

I myself believe these things; and believing them does not, and need not, dilute my will to contribute anything I can to the war effort. I go further. I conceive that it is an article of our policy in fighting this war that we *do so believe* in the bestial lunacy of war. In my mind, the cardinal, the only, point of criticism in the composition of this sentence (even in wartime) is the assumption that the nation has lost its senses. I should myself plead guilty to the charge, if I followed the Vansittart school. But as I see the impossibility of exterminating 80,000,000 Germans, I hold that in the end, when victory is won, we have *no alternative* but to try again to educate and civilise those Germans who remain alive when we have destroyed Nazi-ism. That being so, I cannot accept the principle that we could never negotiate with any German, once the Nazi regime has been totally destroyed or else totally rejected by the Reich. It follows that I believe that a patriotic citizen can give his best to our effort to destroy Nazi-ism while holding such views, and that the bulk of our people have *not* lost all sense and *do* hold these views. If they hold them, they must see the force of not losing any opportunity to stimulate resistance to Nazi-ism in any elements in Germany not totally soaked in the poison of Nazi-ism, and generally to explore any way of bringing this lunacy and supreme tragedy to a righteous end. Thus (in my view) the Duke's opening paragraph is to be criticised only on the score of tactlessness and immoderation. It is devoid neither of logic, patriotism or sense. It contains elements of all three—if it be unsuitable matter for "total war," then so also is the chronic loquacity of our Ministers of State and religion. If it be inept and dangerous, then so, too, is this insistence on the continuance of the luxuries of democratic freedom of speech in a total war against a totalitarian State. And indeed, we pay a heavy price and handicap by enjoying these luxuries while the war, which we are waging to preserve them, lasts. One word more. I admire moral courage as much as (or more than) I admire physical courage. The former kind is a little nearer to my comprehension. It may be also the harder to display in war. It does not surprise me that one or two men are still found brave enough to defend, or not blindly to brand, the Duke of Bedford, even while admitting that he constantly overstates his case and will not accept the necessity for moderation, tact and compromise in war. I am glad such men are to be found. For if there were found none, I should agree with him that we had as a nation lost all our senses with our sense of humour. Let us live and die like men, not sheep.

**THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS INSPECT P.-O.-W. CAMPS AND HOSPITALS IN THE MIDDLE EAST:** M. E. de Haller is a member of the International Red Cross Committee of Geneva. Accompanied by Mr. J. Duchosal (head of the Red Cross Secretariat) and Dr. George Vaucher (Delegate of the Red Cross in Cairo), he has just paid a visit to a prisoners-of-war camp in the Middle East and to the prisoners-of-war wards at the 19th General Hospital nearby. They were conducted on their tour by Colonel R. Venables, A.A.G.S, and by Colonel B. A. Forbes (Inspector of P.-O.-W. Camps). In this picture M. de Haller (on right) is seen talking to an Italian prisoner-patient in one of the hospital wards

## Common Sense and Russia.—

At this stage of the war and the winter, tempers are apt to be short. North-easterly winds contribute to this state of things, even in peacetime. It is not to be denied that those who hold minority views about the war must expect to be flayed alive. Yet there must be many who, not seeking the martyr's crown, yet feel that a lot of nonsense is talked about Russia, and that it would be healthier if some of the pretty haze were dispersed. I myself feel so strongly, but I realise that the blowing away must be done with infinite restraint and tact. I do not wish to be flayed alive, as the Duke of Bedford is. Moral courage I admire; in war, it often amounts to sheer recklessness; and reckless generalisations or particularisations cut no ice, for all the sense and logic they may contain are obscured by the limelight which is turned on phrases spoken in sheer bravado. But points of criticism still burn in the heart. Let me make one, as an experiment. Last May, we most of us regarded Russia as a State unfriendly to our nation and contemptuous of our system of Government and our social structure. We believe with Lord Beaverbrook that to-day her Government has abandoned that unfriendliness in the face of a grave danger and now welcomes us as an ally. But why we should suppose that Stalin (let alone the propaganda-led Russian peasant) should have suddenly discovered unsuspected merits in our political or social system passes my comprehension. Stalin is tactful about us, he says nothing to wound our feelings, but it would be childish to suppose that his opinions are changed in an hour. Or, for that matter, our opinions about Bolshevism as a form of Government. We sincerely admire the self-sacrifice and courage of the Russian people and the iron will and organising ability of their leaders. They no doubt pay us some such compliments in return, though not such a tribute as we receive—justly or no—from America. But that does not mean that Britain's effort is known to the Russian people. Unless I am all at sea, this war against Hitlerism is *Russia's war in Russian eyes* and Stalin wishes his people so to believe. If victory is won, it will be *Russia's* victory, and Russia's sacrifice. Stalin has colour for his belief. In loss of territory, an area twice the size of the Reich against—the Channel Islands!

## The Post-war Aspect.—

This fact really should not surprise us or even pain us, if we can still face historical and psychological facts (as we can face the hard facts of material warfare). But it should give us pause for deep reflection. For such a belief, held firmly during the war, is not very likely to be forgotten in peace, least of all in a victorious peace, by the Russians. It were a large assumption that a scorched, blasted, ruined Russia, victorious at last with her allies, would quietly embrace a resettlement of Europe on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, and equal opportunity for friend and foe alike. Come now; a large assumption you must admit! And that is only one aspect among a score concealed in that rosy haze which invests our idea of the mind of Russia and our relations with the Soviets. I cannot believe that it is essential to the war effort that we should turn our eyes from facts and human nature in our relations with Russia. On the contrary, I believe it must help us greatly in our determination to aid Russia and in our preparations (which I think are premature in this immediate and supreme crisis of the war) for the Peace, if we view Stalin and the Soviets with all the clarity and realism and lack of sentimentality with which they view us. We are firm allies, out to help each other, in a fearful crisis; and even M. Maisky, most warm cementer of friendship and understanding between our two great nations, has not concealed that realism of view held by Stalin and Russia. Mr. Churchill, exceptionally on our side, has held firm to the realistic view. The rest of the Government and those Bishops (!) see Russia through a rosy haze of sentiment and wishful thinking. (The Episcopal Bench has advised us that, after all, the Russians are quite respectable people for us to leave cards on, having had a very sudden and convenient *conversion to religion*. And that is sheer bunkum!) The realistic view, and (I contend) the only view which can save us from disappointment, errors and misplaced effort, is that which admits that supreme necessity implies strange bedfellows, who deserve and demand all our present help and sympathy; but that our own political views and those of our present bedfellows are dormant, not dead, and may easily break out into livelines if we assume too much. In a word, I am convinced that cool, unsentimental thinking and stark realism are essential in our relations with Russia if both partners are to get the best out of the partnership, and if we are not to suffer bitter disillusionment.

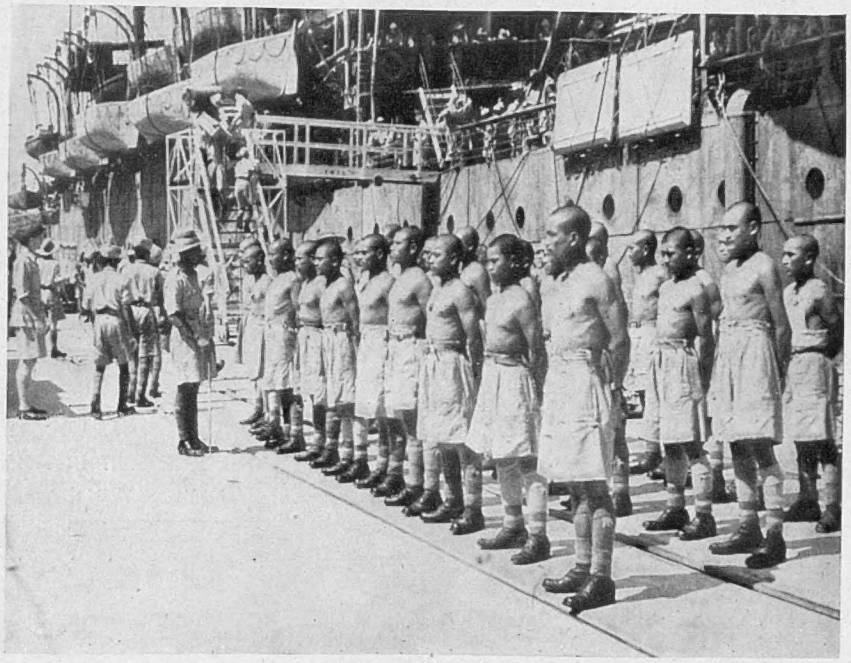
## Nature Takes a Hand.—

How every one of us can help to "make munitions" was explained the other day by Mr. Grenfell, if I remember rightly. We can do it by saving every ounce of coal or coke, and by curtailing the use of gas and electricity and oil for lighting and heating. God blew with his winds and the Armada was liquidated; and Nature has once more come to our aid this October in the Battle of Production. I look back vainly to find any parallel to this October in the matter of high temperatures. Every year since I lived in the country my central heating has been set going before October 20, from sheer necessity, not as a peacetime luxury. Practically all country houses of whatever size are damp, and cold damp begins normally to penetrate them early in October, when the temperature variations cause serious condensation. But this October it has been possible to air one's house thoroughly day after day, and, with the aid of a summer sun on the roofs, to keep the inside temperature well over 65 almost continuously. It would have been possible to live in reasonable comfort all the month without even one wood fire in the evening. I should like to know the total amounts saved throughout the country by this abnormal prolongation of summer in coal, coke, oil, gas and electricity. In each item that saving must have been great, and a useful contribution to the war effort.

THE OLD STAGER

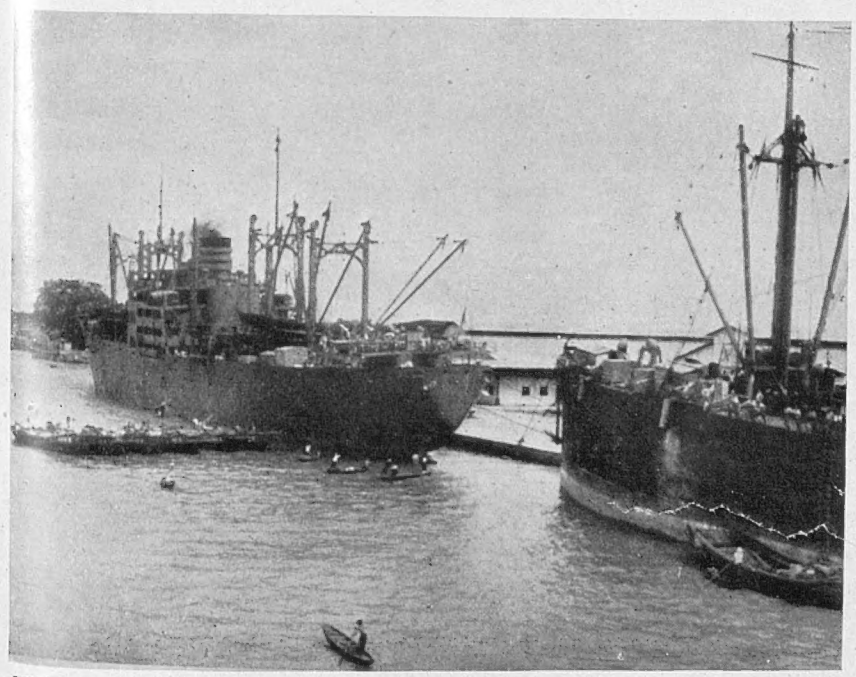
**AUSTRALIAN TROOPS, JUST ARRIVED IN MALAYA, cleaning up after their sea voyage in their canvas camp in the jungle :** Thousands of Australian soldiers have recently arrived in Singapore to reinforce the strong forces already there. All arms of the Services are represented, including infantry, artillery, engineers and A.S.C. The convoy which carried the troops was the largest to reach Malaya since the outbreak of war

# PREPAREDNESS AT SINGAPORE



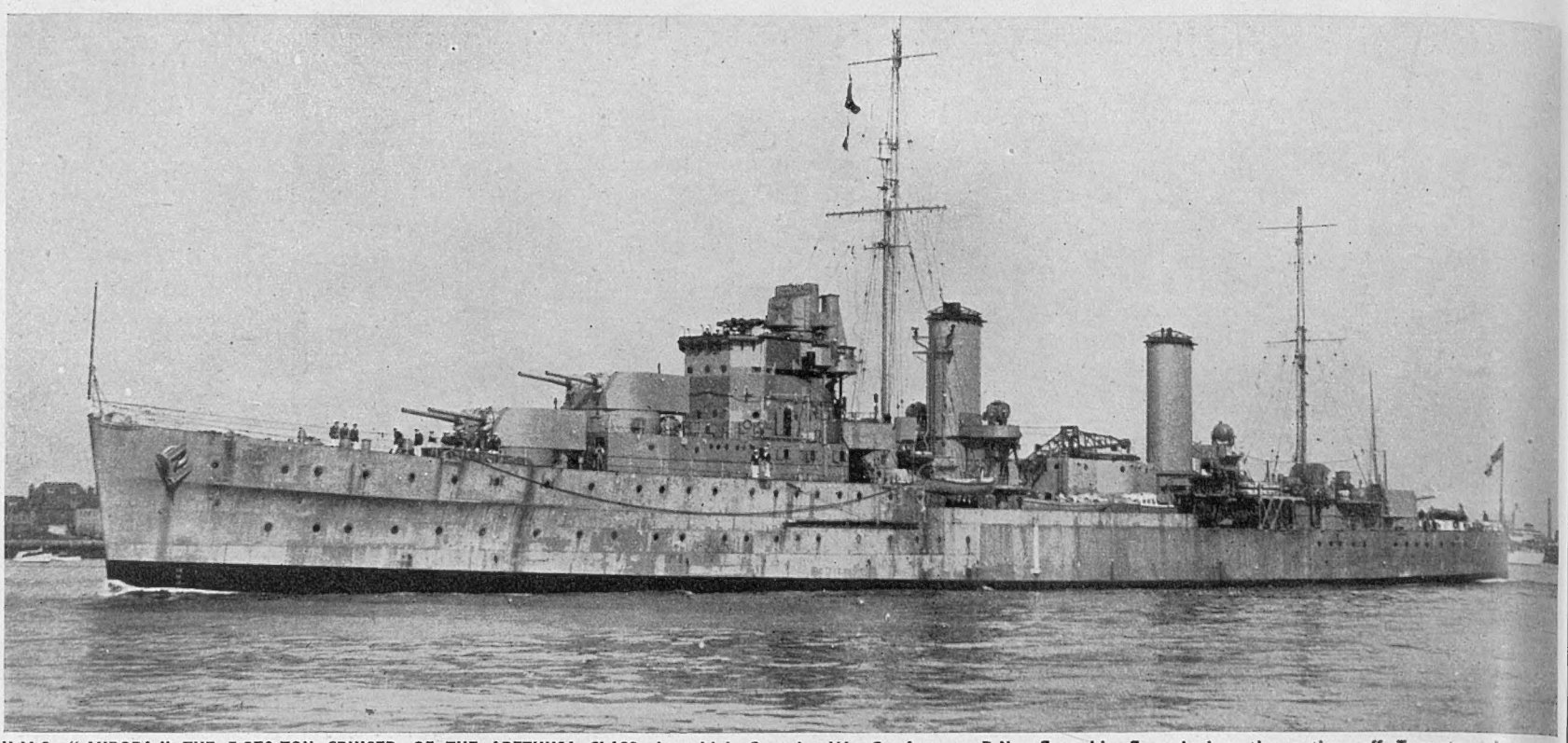
**HE APPROACHES TO THE HARBOUR AND NAVAL BASE AT SINGAPORE ARE CONSTANTLY PATROLLED :** The minesweepers are officered by British Naval Reservists and are manned by native Malay seamen. They carry out daily patrols of the dense minefields sown off the British base

**GURKHAS JOIN THE OTHER BRITISH FORCES IN MALAYA :** Several battalions of Gurkhas (the tough little fighting men from Nepal on the southern slopes of the Himalayas) have recently landed at Singapore. When this picture was taken the Gurkhas had stripped to the waist, for fatigue duty

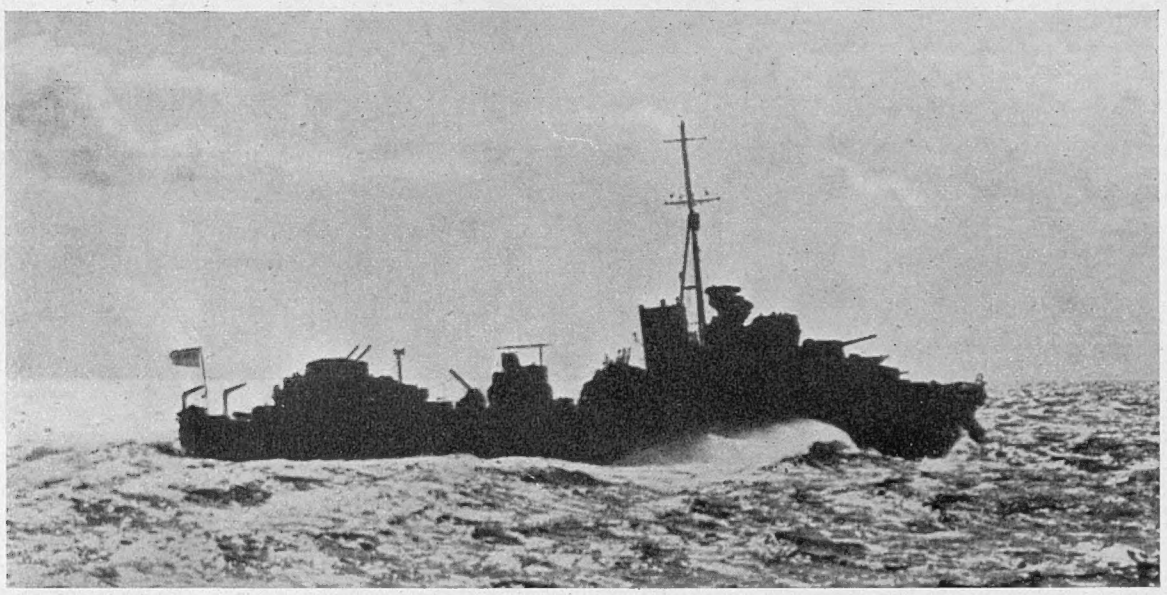


**THE THREAT FROM JAPAN—Japanese troop transports docked at Saigon in French Indo-China :** Japan was granted troop and air bases in French Indo-China under an agreement made with the Vichy Government. Moored alongside the transports in this picture are small petrol-driven boats described as "invasion rafts for shallow waters"

**JAPANESE TROOPS TAKE OVER FROM THE VICHY FRENCH IN SAIGON :** The Japs were not long in taking full advantage of their victory over France. The bases ceded to them were quickly occupied, thus bringing the menace of war a little nearer to Singapore. Some of their troops have been equipped with bicycles in true Nazi fashion !



**H.M.S. "AURORA," THE 5,270-TON CRUISER OF THE ARETHUSA CLASS, in which Captain W. G. Agnew, R.N., flew his flag during the action off Taranto when two enemy convoys escorted by warships were annihilated by a much smaller British force**



**THE TWO DESTROYERS "LANCE" AND "LIVELY," WHICH TOOK PART IN THE ACTION, are of the type illustrated here. Both have been built during the progress of the present war, and both displace 1,920 tons**

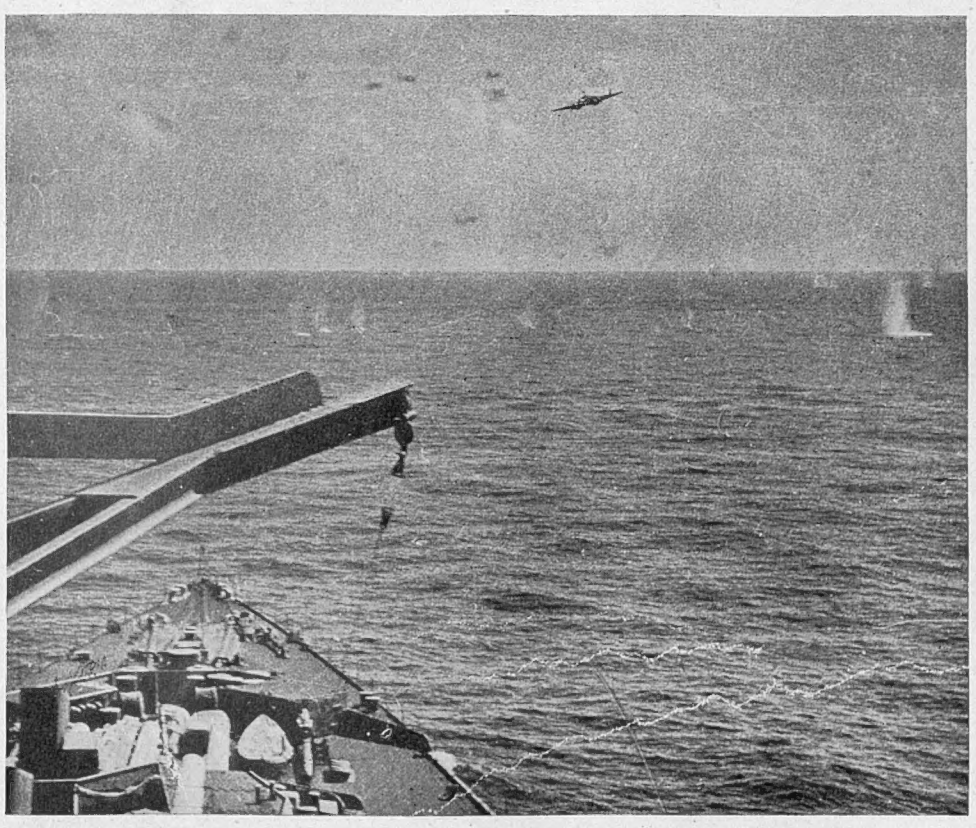
# THE ANNIHILATION OF TWO AXIS CONVOYS

*Ten Supply Ships and Two Destroyers Sunk by the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean*

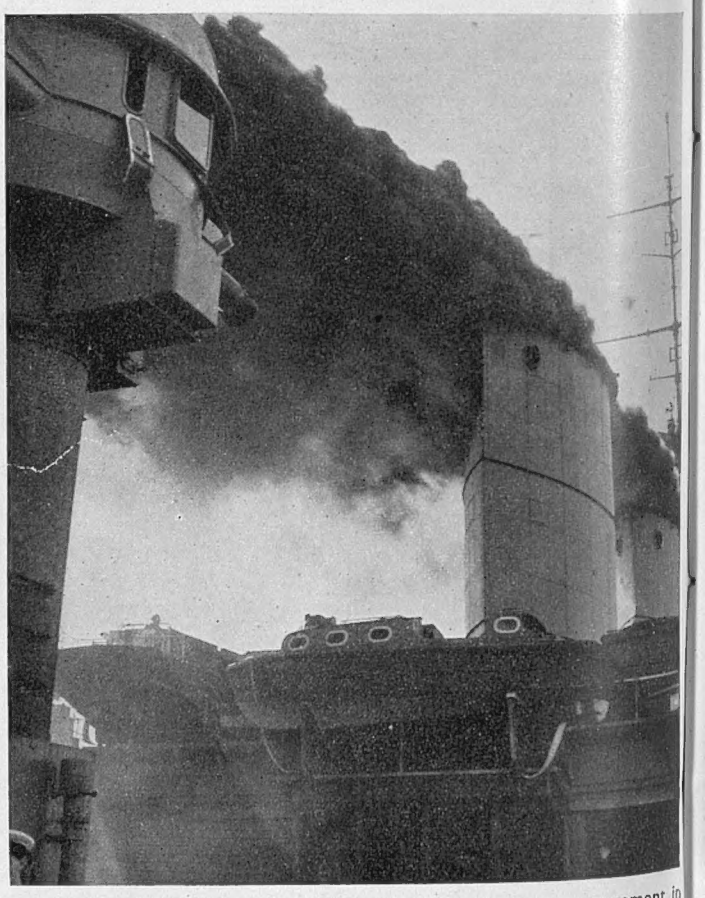
ON Saturday afternoon, November 8, an enemy convoy consisting of eight Italian supply ships, escorted by destroyers, was sighted off Taranto, in the Mediterranean, by a Maryland aircraft of the R.A.F. As soon as the aircraft's report was received, a patrolling force of the Royal Navy was directed to intercept the convoy.

This force consisted of the two cruisers *Aurora* (Captain W. G. Agnew, R.N.) and *Penelope* (Captain A. D. Nicholl, R.N.), and the destroyers *Lance* (Lieut.-Com. R. W. F. Northcott, R.N.) and *Lively* (Lieut.-Com. W. F. E. Hussey, R.N.).

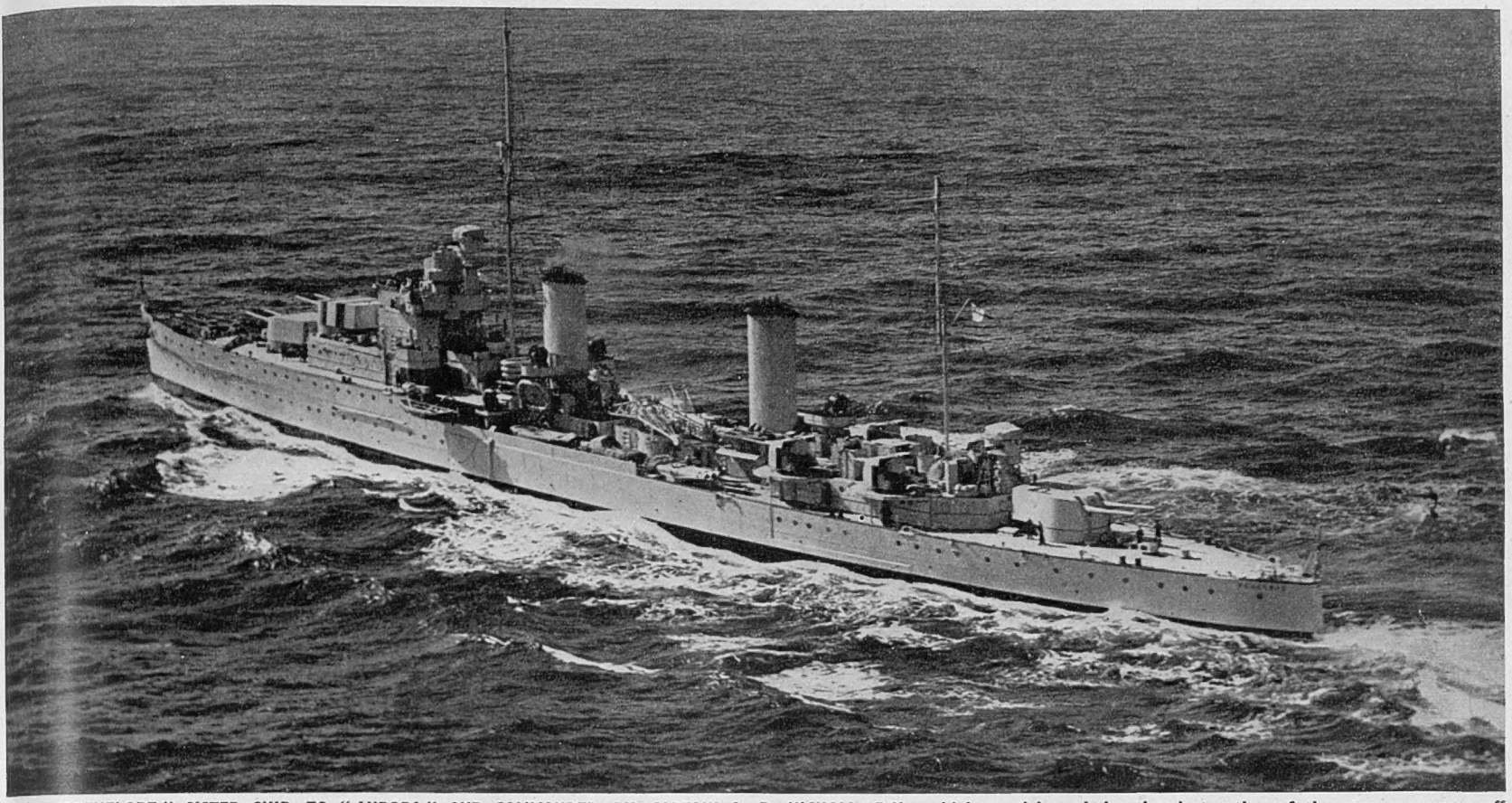
Under the command of Captain Agnew, this force made contact with the enemy at about 1 a.m. It was then found that the larger convoy of eight supply vessels escorted by destroyers was being joined by another convoy of two supply ships escorted by a further two destroyers: this operation was being covered by two powerful



**WHEN H.M.S. "NELSON" WAS ATTACKED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN:** When an important British convoy was recently attacked in the Mediterranean by Italian aircraft, escorting naval forces under Vice-Admiral Sir James Somerville accounted for thirteen enemy aeroplanes. It was during a second attack that the battleship *Nelson*, of 33,950 tons, was hit, but scarcely damaged, by a torpedo dropped by a Fiat B.R. 20 machine which was subsequently shot down by our fighters. This remarkable picture, just received, shows the Italian aircraft attacking, with the splash (right centre) of the torpedo which hit the vessel

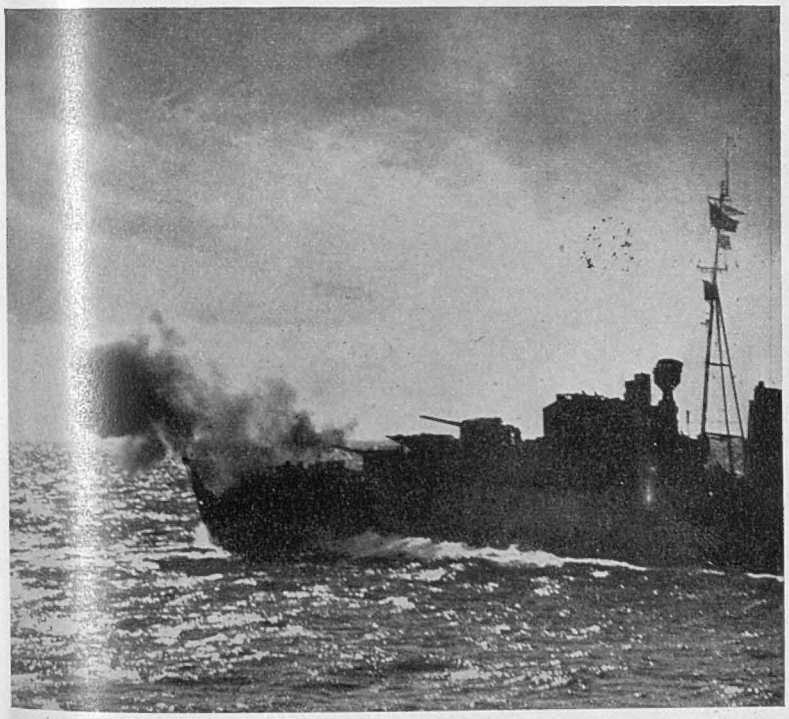


**A CRUISER IN ACTION AGAINST THE ITALIANS:** After an engagement in the Mediterranean against Italian warships, a British cruiser sets up a smoke-screen to mingle with that of a sister ship to conceal their movements from enemy reconnaissance aircraft



**H.M.S. "PENELOPE," SISTER SHIP TO "AURORA," AND COMMANDED BY CAPTAIN A. D. NICHOLL, R.N., which participated in the destruction of the enemy convoys off Taranto on Sunday last. This 6-in. gun cruiser was completed in 1936**

*Aurora* and *Penelope* are both of the improved Arethusa class—cruisers of 5,270 tons, with a complement of 450. The former cost £1,250,000 to build and was completed in November 1937. She has six 6-in. guns, four 4-in. anti-aircraft guns, and sixteen of smaller calibre, as well as six torpedo tubes. Last year she took part in the cutting out of the *Altmark* in Norway, when 300 British prisoners were liberated : and later she was unsuccessfully attacked by German aircraft off the Norwegian coast. Her Commander, Captain Agnew, is a gunnery specialist and one of the youngest captains in the Royal Navy. *Penelope* is armed in the same manner as *Aurora*. She was completed in November 1936, and cost £1,290,000. These two ships have a tonnage which is the minimum for ocean-going efficiency, and their armament is adequate to deal with likely convoy-raiders

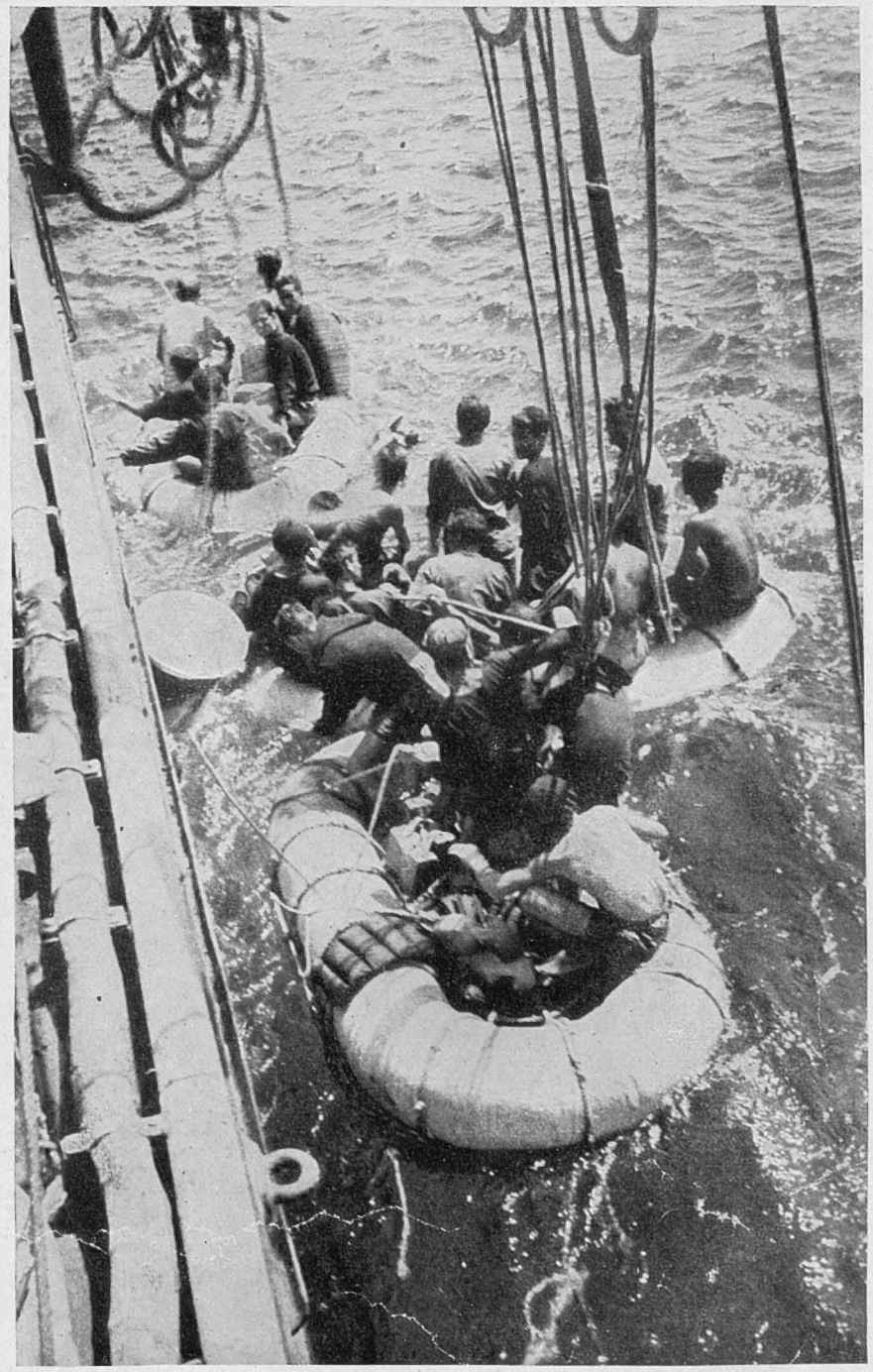


**ONE OF THE LIGHTNING CLASS OF DESTROYERS IN ACTION**

H.M.S. *Lance* and H.M.S. *Lively*, the two destroyers which took part in the action off Taranto, are both of the Lightning class, which are all of modified Javelin design. These two vessels are each of 1,920 tons displacement, and are thus amongst the largest vessels of their class in the world. They are armed with six 4·7-in. guns and carry eight 21-in. torpedo-tubes. Their speed is in excess of 36 knots. Both destroyers were laid down in 1938 and were completed after the war had begun

10,000-ton 8-in. gun cruisers of the Trento class. Despite the disparity of force, Captain Agnew immediately engaged. "The Italian escort and covering force, reckoning ships and weight of metal, were something like twice as strong as the British force, but that preponderance did not suffice to protect the convoy committed to its charge, not one of which survived," as one naval expert declared later.

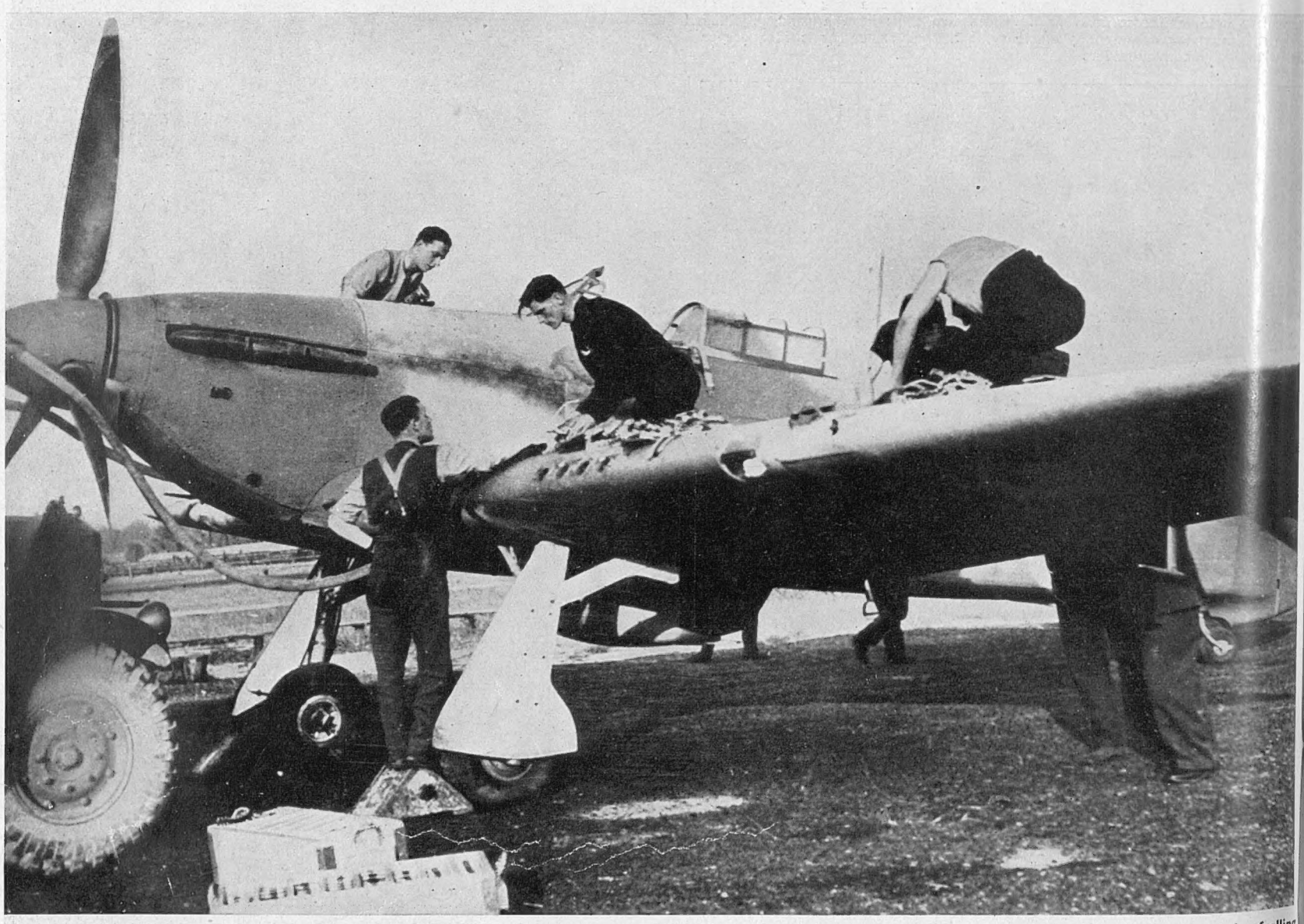
Nine of the ten enemy supply ships were set on fire and sunk. One of these was an ammunition ship, which blew up. The tenth enemy supply ship, a laden tanker of about 10,000 tons, was left blazing furiously. This ship was seen to be still burning ten hours later, and it is considered that she is a total loss. Of the Italian warships, one destroyer was sunk and at least one other seriously damaged. Later the Italians themselves admitted the loss of this destroyer, too. *No casualties or damage was suffered by his Majesty's ships in this engagement.* While returning, our ships were attacked by enemy torpedo-carrying aircraft, but the attack was ineffective, and Captain Agnew's force reached harbour unscathed from this brilliant exploit.



**THE CREW OF AN ITALIAN DESTROYER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN :** The action off Taranto is only one of a number of successful actions by the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean. This picture, just to hand, shows the result of a previous action in the Near East. An Italian destroyer had been sent to the bottom, and the men had managed to push off from their sinking vessel in rubber floats and paddle towards a British ship, the crew of which are hoisting the enemy sailors aboard

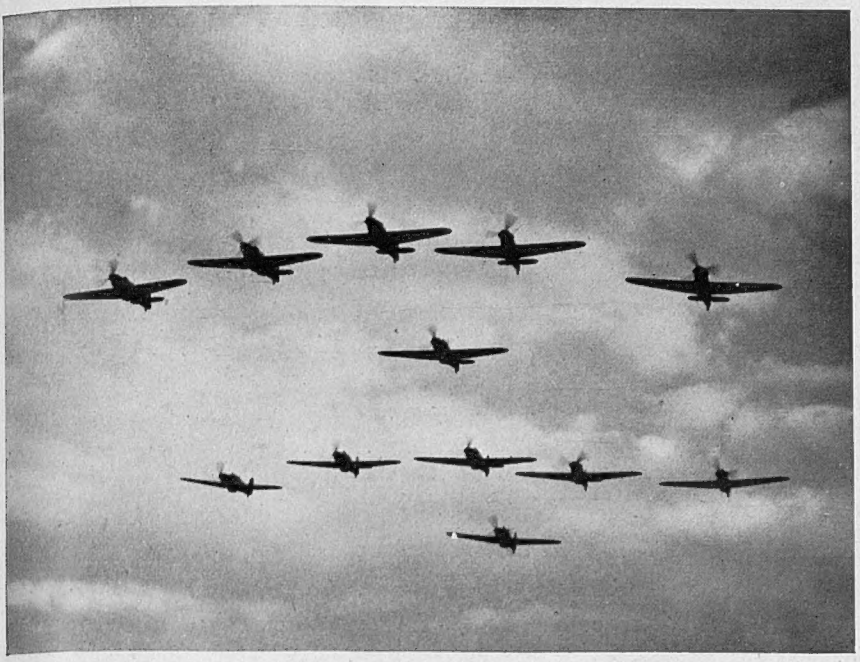
# FIGHTER "SWEEPS" by the R.A.F. and the NEW HURRICANE BOMBER

**OFF OVER THE CHANNEL FOR ONE OF THEIR FAMOUS FIGHTER SWEEPS : A mass formation of Spitfires of the R.A.F. heading out to sea for one of the sweeps which are now being carried out, in daylight, in almost continuous sequence as part of our Western air offensive against the Germans**



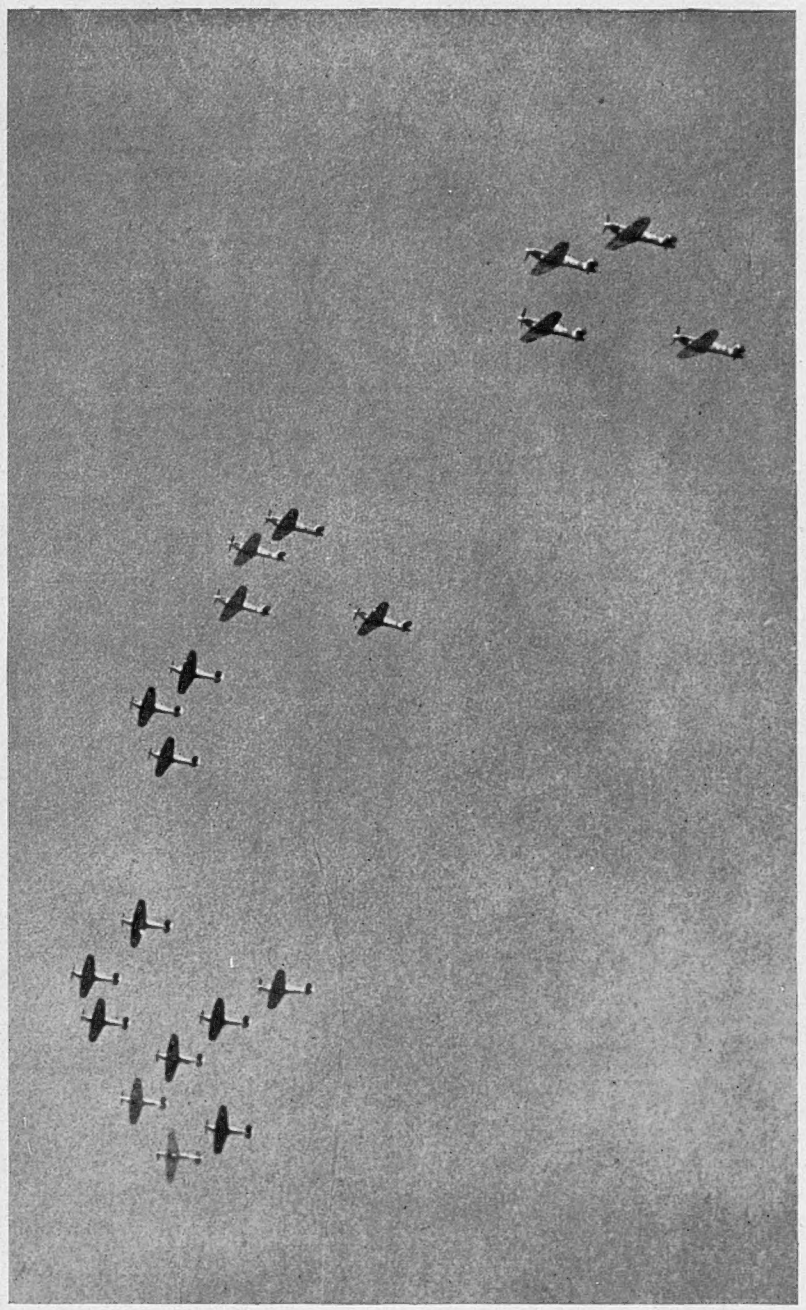
**AN INCIDENT DURING OUR GREAT AIR OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST : Immediately one of the fighter aircraft returns, the ground staff concentrate on rearming and refuelling**

Britain has taken the initiative in the air over Western Europe. This fact is recognised now on two continents : in America it has been hailed with delight ; and in this country it is regarded as a sign of our determination to aid our Russian allies by delivering powerful and continuous blows at the war effort of the enemy on the West Front. Daily, and in a steady stream, fighter aircraft of the R.A.F. stream out over the Channel, in great numbers, to hammer away at factories, gun sites, harbours, shipping, communications, and troop concentrations. So far, our losses have been surprisingly small, considering the weight of the attacks ; and into the struggle the new Hurricane bombers have entered, to support the efforts of the Spitfire squadrons. The pictures reproduced here were all taken within the past few days ; and they show how the R.A.F. have already got into their stride in the never-ceasing offensive

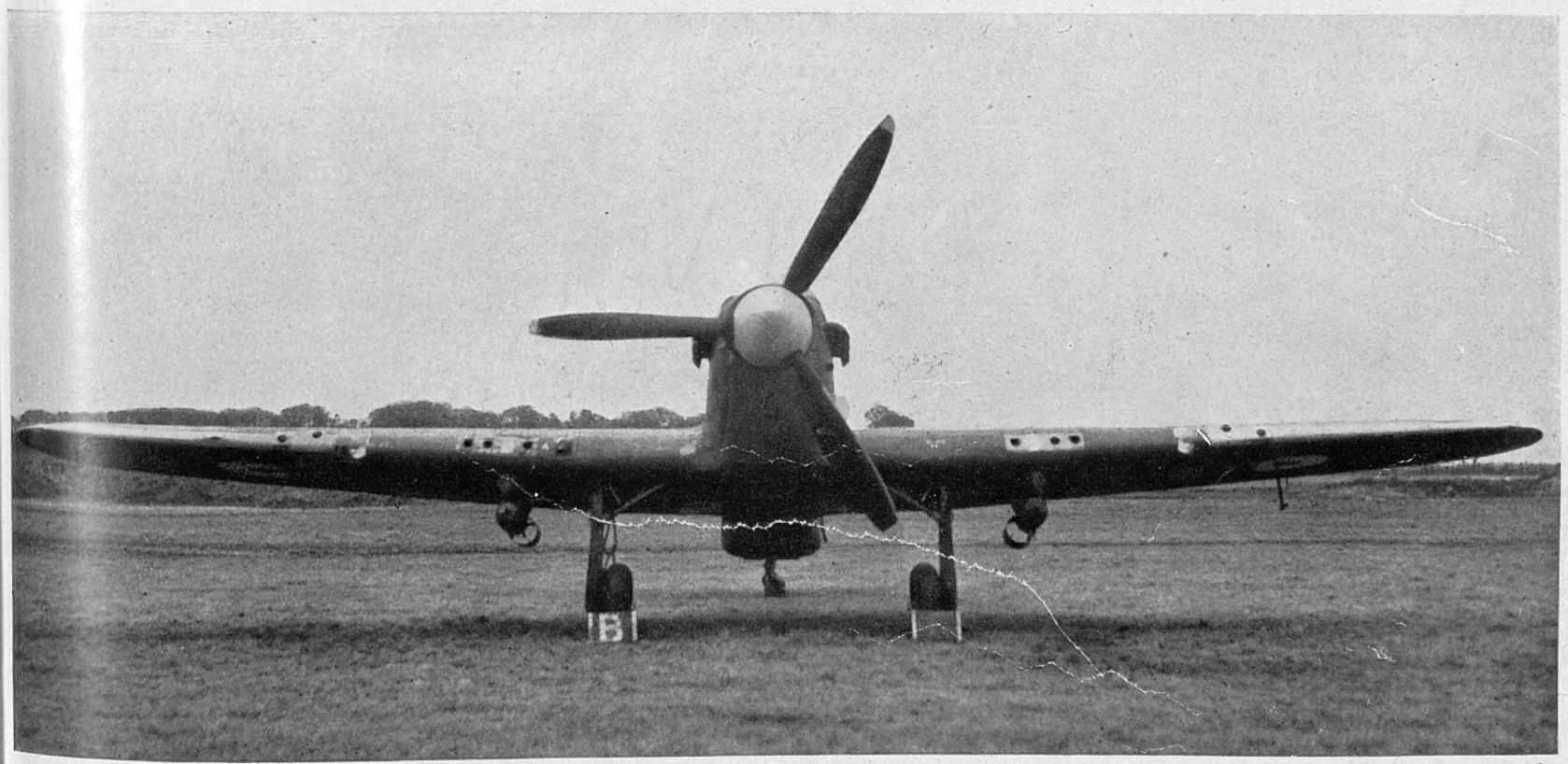


AN IMPRESSIVE SPECTACLE WHICH IS NOW A DAILY OCCURRENCE : A Hurricane squadron flies off in formation on a sweep over enemy-occupied territory across the Channel

THE NEW HURRICANE BOMBER : How its bombs are fixed beneath each of the wings for low-level attacks. These bombs are fitted with delayed-action fuses



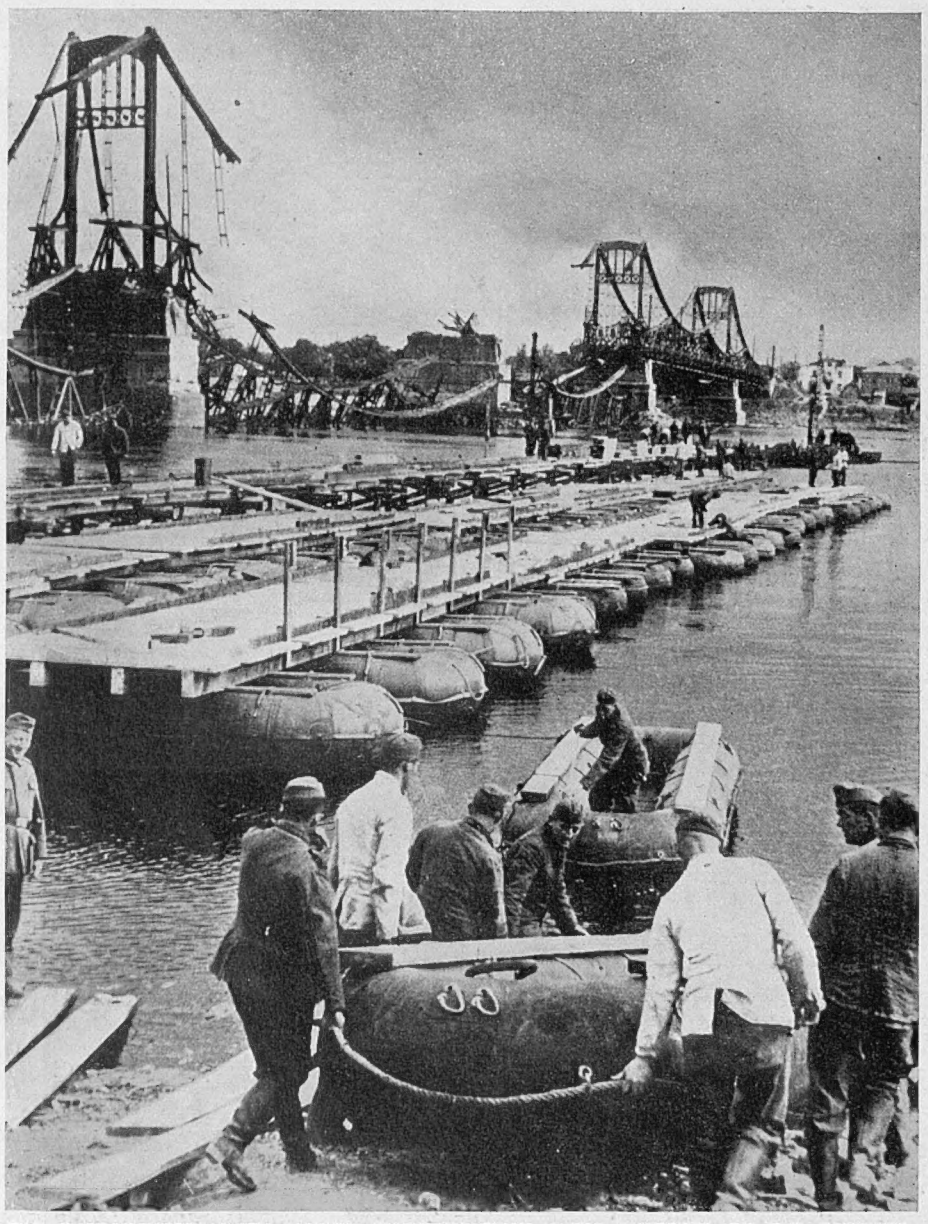
**HIGH UP IN THE SKY : A Hurricane formation on the way out to France :** To increase the power of the R.A.F. fighter force in low-level attacks on shipping and ground targets, Hurricanes have been equipped to carry bombs. These fighter-bombers have already proved their worth in recent successful attacks by Fighter Command in Northern France. The Hurricane bombers are the successors to the "ground-strafers" of the last war. Fitted with delayed-action fuses to enable the aircraft to get clear before the explosion, the bombs form a powerful addition to the fighter's already formidable armoury. This development is in strong contrast to the German use of Messerschmitt "fighter-bombers" last winter for indiscriminate bombing from a height of 25,000 ft. or more. Pilots of Hurricanes carrying bombs have made full use of the element of surprise. Sweeping in over tree-tops, they have shot up targets with machine-guns, released their bombs from heights ranging from a few hundred feet to ten feet, and then turned fighters again to renew the attack with gunfire



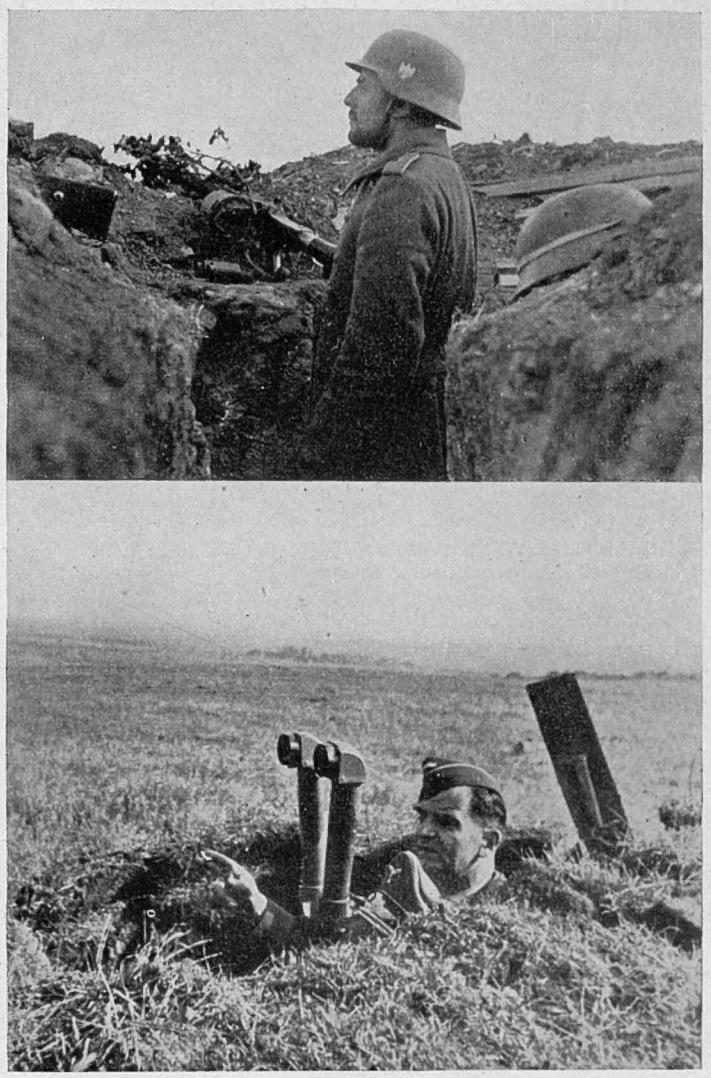
ONE BOMB BENEATH EACH WING : The Hurricane in its newest form as a bomber for low-level attack. Whilst retaining its very powerful machine-gun armament, the aircraft now carries delayed-action bombs with which to harry enemy ground targets and shipping. Once the bomb load is dropped, up goes the speed and the Hurricane can then function purely as a fighter aircraft!

# FOUR PICTURES from RUSSIA

*Which Illustrate Some of the Enemy Tactics During the Campaigns on the Northern Sector and in the Ukraine*



**THE THOROUGHNESS WITH WHICH COMMUNICATIONS WERE WRECKED BY THE RUSSIANS :** This picture is supposed to show how clever the Germans are in the work of reconstructing the devastated bridges of Russia ; but it also shows how thoroughly the Russians performed their self-appointed task of destroying everything that might prove of value to the enemy before they retreated. The scene here comes from the neighbourhood of Kiev : even weeks after its abandonment by the Russians, the wrecked bridge is still unusable, a temporary pontoon bridge being in service



**TWO SCENES FROM THE ENEMY LINES IN FRONT OF LENINGRAD :** Apparently the fighting around the Northern capital has developed into trench warfare. The upper picture shows one of the German "field positions" In front of the city : the men are reported to have "massive quarters, dug far into the earth, and regular trenches." The lower picture (also from the Leningrad area) shows an observation post occupied by the German *Luftwaffe* as a look-out on a hill overlooking the city

**THE FIRST SNOWS HAVE ALREADY COME TO THE UKRAINE, WHICH IS NOW EXPERIENCING HEAVY WINTRY WEATHER**

It may be true, as M. Maisky (and others) have pointed out, that General Winter will not stop the German advance in Russia : but, equally, General Winter will not be welcomed by the German armies—and certainly not by the German soldier. Some weeks ago, the first snows came to the Ukraine, and the ground traversed by the enemy's transports became a morass : by now, the snows may have been turned into ice, rendering somewhat freer movement. But, all the time, the German soldier—used to happier and milder climates—will be suffering from the extreme cold and the absence of permanent billets ! It will be noticed from the above picture that the Germans are still making considerable use of horsed transport

**THREE DAYS' ADVANCE; THEN TEN DAYS' PAUSE—The German method of mounting their offensives on the Russian front. After the first three days of furious assault by mechanised units, a period of ten days is then necessary for repairs, refitting, and re-equipping. Thus the campaign has been a long series of pushes and pauses. (See notes below and diagrams on following pages)**—*Drawing by L. Ashwell Wood*

# "PUSH AND PAUSE" ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT

*Throughout the Present Campaign the German Advance has Followed a Set Programme—Three Days of Furious Advance Followed by Ten Days to Re-equip and Remount the Halted Offensive. Why this Method has been Imposed on the Germans is Described Here in a Series of Special Notes and Diagram Drawings*

AN analysis of the four and a half months of fighting on the Russian front reveals a succession of occasions upon which the Germans have appeared to be on the point of seizing a particular town when their forward movement has suddenly slowed down and Russian resistance has been given time to build itself up in front of the threatening spearhead.

Why has the enemy's forward movement come to a standstill? Is it because the Russian resistance has been too strong; or is it because there are factors within the spearhead itself which inevitably slow it down; or is the gradual cessation of forward movement due to a combination of both causes or sets of causes?

In the case of the attack upon France, the resistance to the Germans was so weak that any pause in the enemy's thrusts could only have been due to inherent causes. While not desiring in the least to underrate the tough elasticity which has so often characterised the Russian defence, it would appear that the German advances have been slowed down *by causes within the Panzer divisions themselves* ever since their first forward rush on June 22. Through the intervening four months, there has been a *succession* of forward movements, but not a *continuous* one. The pauses, in fact, have been as marked as the advances.

Each forward movement has occupied roughly a period of three days. Difficult terrain, a river, the weather—all have on occasion been given as causes. Perhaps some, or all, of them were real factors in slowing the pace.

But in too many cases the slowing down has amounted to actual standstill. *Why has this movement resolved itself into a series of three-day pushes and ten-day pauses?*

The answer is to be found in half-a-dozen causes. These may be set out briefly thus: Petrol shortage; ammunition shortage; tank track failure; tank drivers' endurance; infantrymen's endurance; food supplies; sickness through strain (noise, fumes, concussion, etc.); the advancing of air supports.

To these on occasion may be added: weather; nature of the soil over which advance is being made.

The problem of bringing *petrol supplies* up to the fighting zone is in itself a difficult one. Without petrol the mechanised vehicles, tanks, gun tractors, lorries, cannot move.

The question of *ammunition supply* is a still more delicate one. The tanks can hold only a limited amount of shells and cartridges: the tank-gunner must be as careful of his ammunition supply as an air-gunner. He can only use limited bursts of fire if his tank's usefulness is to last out a battle of ten hours' duration. If he blazed away continuously in a fierce battle he would have fired his last shot in a couple of hours!

*The tank* itself is a delicate weapon. The hours of its battle effectiveness are limited. The track is its weak point; and the endurance of the track *in battle* is limited to a few hours. One link cracks—and the tank is immobilised and must then halt to be repaired, if the conditions allow. At such a time it is highly vulnerable.

The *tank driver's physical endurance* is another cause for the slowing of a Panzer drive. A brisk engagement starts; the resistance may be prolonged; the heat, noise, fumes, danger—all tend to use up his nervous and muscular reserves.

*The infantryman* following the tanks and light guns is also subject to physical strain. The noise factor tells on him more than on the man in the tank. The roar of a Panzer battle is terrific.

The infantryman, packed in a lorry by the side of a wood, waits until the enemy airmen discover him, when his reserves of endurance may become used up under the strain of bombing.

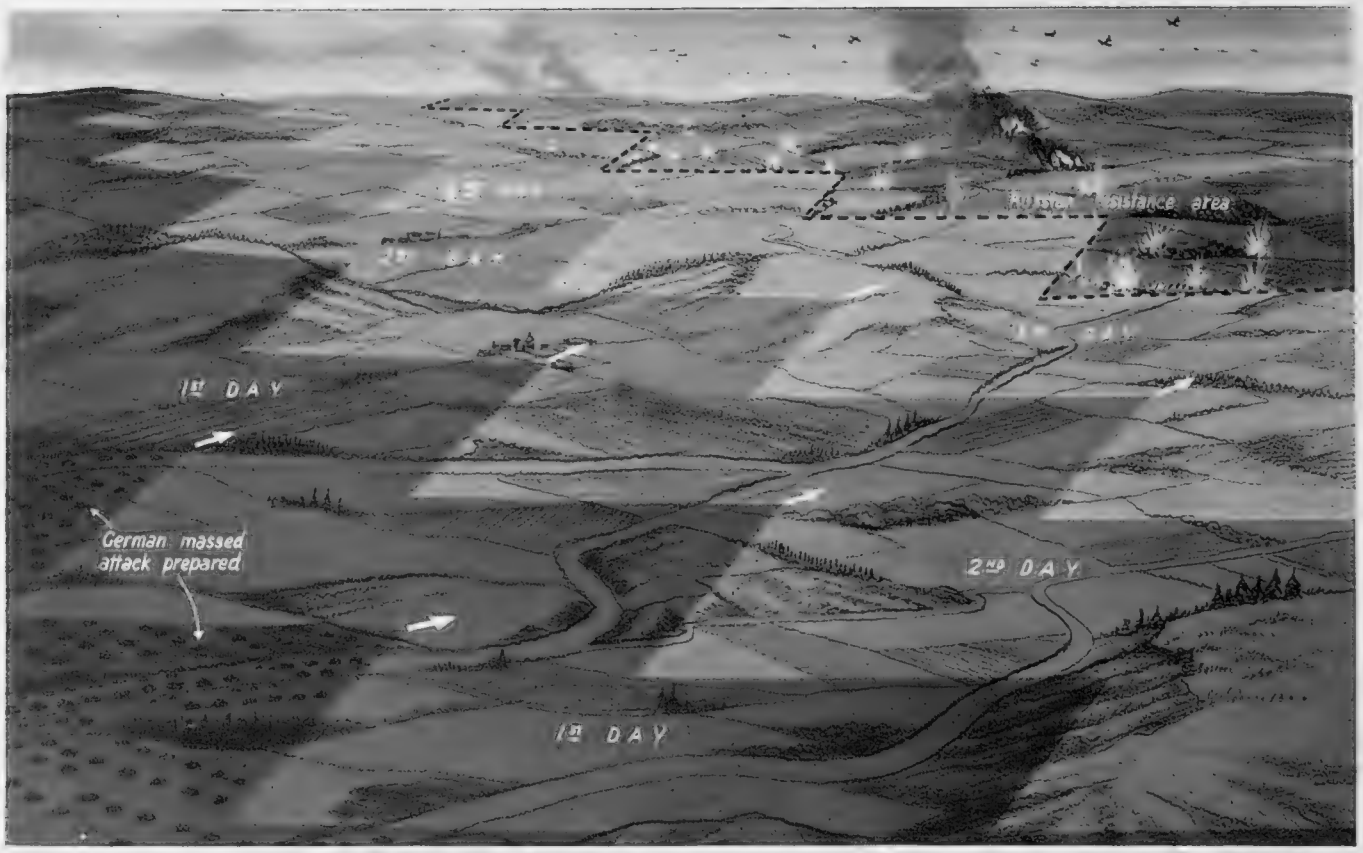
*Sickness strikes the ranks.* Over and above the strain (which can be relieved by rest) sickness will strike a certain proportion of the battle troops. They must be sent to the rear or receive special treatment — if medical lorries are at hand. (They may not be.)

*The advancing of air support* would need a chapter by itself. The Panzer thrust must be supported by the dive bombers. And their base cannot be too far in rear. Some sort of improvised aerodrome must be found for them. This must be built at furious speed.

Day after day of sleeting rain; main roads clogged and broken; secondary roads deeply rutted; lorry convoys jammed and halted; tanks out of action and being repaired; slimy mud; lack of provisions and ammunition. . . . Is it any wonder that the three days of furious action must be followed by ten days of pause to rearm and re-equip? *(See also following pages)*

**RUSSIAN TANKS ON THE EASTERN FRONT BEING ATTACKED BY GERMAN STUKA DIVE-BOMBERS: In order to understand the nature of the struggle in Russia, it is necessary to point out that the tank, as at present constructed, has one very important disability when regarded from the point of view of endurance. Under the strain of battle conditions, its tracks have a very short life—in continuous action, this is a matter only of hours. If put to the preliminary strain of having to propel itself along the road before it goes into action, the tank is apt to break one of its links: as it steers by its tracks, it thus becomes unusable and immobilised. To save strain, the tank is conveyed on special lorries to the scene of action wherever possible**

# "PUSH AND PAUSE" on the RUSSIAN FRONT *(continued)*




**HOW THE THREE-DAY PUSH OF THE GERMAN PANZER DIVISIONS IS CARRIED OUT: The infantry and tanks are massed in preparation for the assault and then for three days they push as far forward as is possible, throwing in everything they possess. Gradually, however, this movement slows down, and then comes the ten-day period of repair and recuperation**—*Drawing by L. Ashwell Wood*

**AND WHAT OF THE INFANTRY DURING THESE THREE DAYS OF FURIOUS ASSAULT? Their endurance is, necessarily, a limiting factor in the German scheme**—*Drawing by L. Ashwell Wood*

The function of the German infantry and "shock troops" is here shown in detail. One of the principal methods of the enemy is to advance his picked troops by means of quick transport to form "pockets" in advance of the regular infantry and to hold on to the positions thus won until the slower line regiments can consolidate them. All these troops are liable to the strain of a modern battle—the roar of the tanks alone being nerve-shattering

**WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE**

*A Note on*

## WHEN AND HOW THE GERMANS AND RUSSIANS USE THEIR INFANTRY

A DESCRIPTION of the work of the new infantry would be incomplete without some reference to the revolutionary happenings of the Eastern Front. Although no one is in a position to draw positive conclusions, least of all anyone in England, yet some tentative and very curious points may be made.

Perhaps the most important of these is the one mentioned by Lord Beaverbrook, in his House of Lords speech on October 23, when he passed on a remark by Stalin to the effect that the Germans "no longer concentrated their tank units, but distributed them among infantry units." Moreover, the tanks, when immobilised, were surrounded quickly with bulwarks of earth and made into "strong-points," from which infantry units were sent "to invade territory and return if the attacks were unsuccessful." Stalin said that "this was an excellent formation, and he was considering methods of dealing with it."

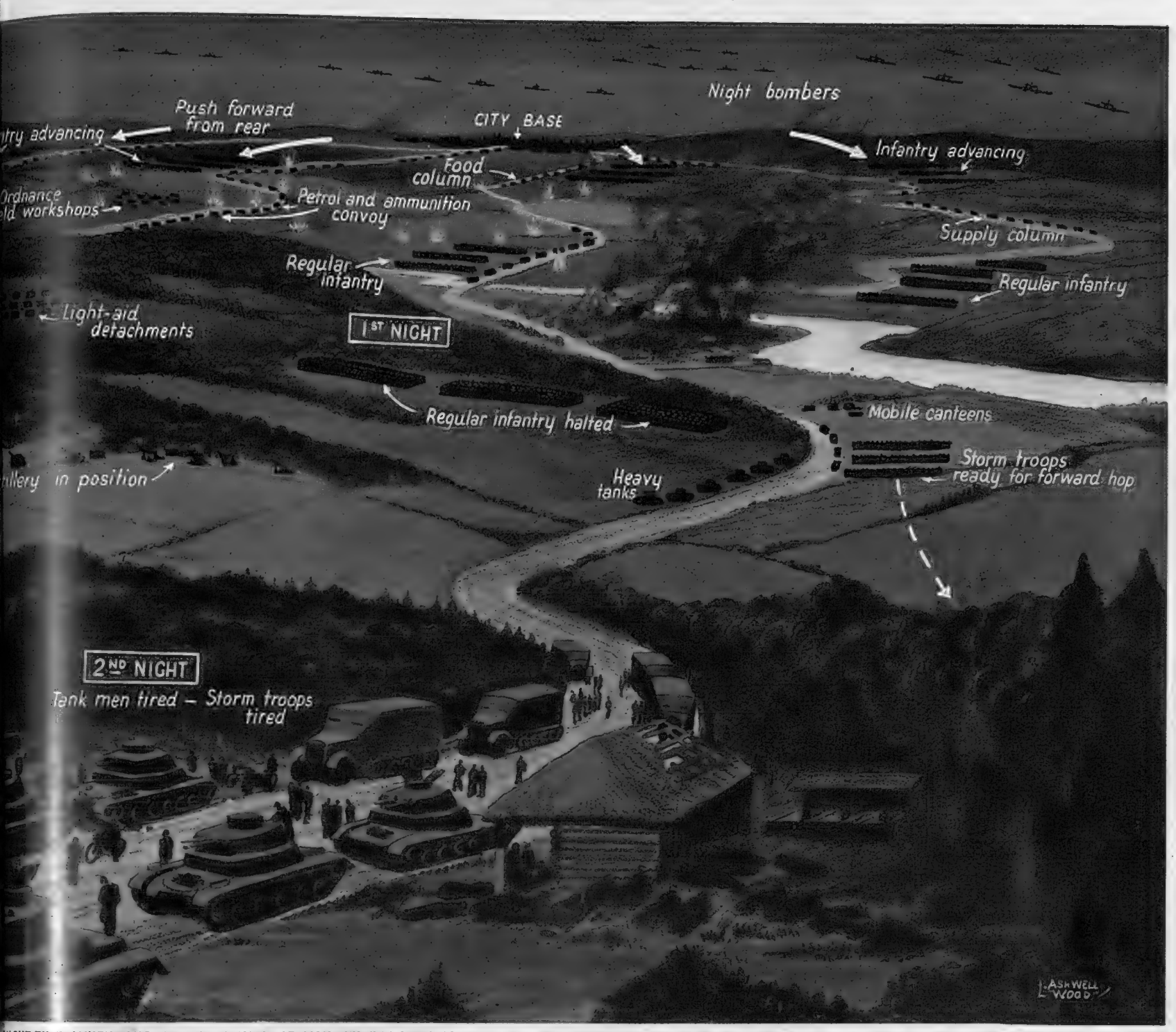
The curious feature about this development is that it indicates a return to the earliest days of tank warfare, and there is nothing new in it to British tankees and infantry. What it does show, however, is that the Germans have found in Russia that they cannot use successfully the tactics of unsupported armoured thrusts that won them France, Greece and Libya. The areas to be pierced and encircled have been too vast, the defenders too numerous and resolute.

So far as we can ascertain, the German method with infantry has been as follows:

Some of them, shock-troops, have been sent ahead with the spearhead of motor-cyclists, dive-bombers, parachutists and tanks. Travelling in armoured carriers, their job has been to establish footholds at regular intervals in the new territory. Then they have been left behind by the spearhead to hold those points until such time as lorry-loads of regular infantry can be brought up—sometimes plane-loads. Then the shock-troops have been released for further spearhead work.

The motorised infantry have alighted from their lorries on arrival at the strong-points, or zones of concentration, and have either proceeded to deal, on foot, with remaining pockets of local Russian resistance, or have awaited orders to proceed in their lorries to neighbouring towns, villages and communications and do the same thing there. All this accomplished, apparently, they have been moved forward again, their places being taken in turn by second-class troops of permanent occupation.

That, however, was only the first phase. It did not make allowance for strong Russian counter-attacks, for guerilla resistance, or for the sudden blunting of the spearheads against securely fortified positions, such as those outside Leningrad and Moscow. These conditions have forced the German High Command to revive the tactics of yesteryear in many cases. While the irresistible impetus of their armies continues at the rear, the infantry in front becomes piled up, and is



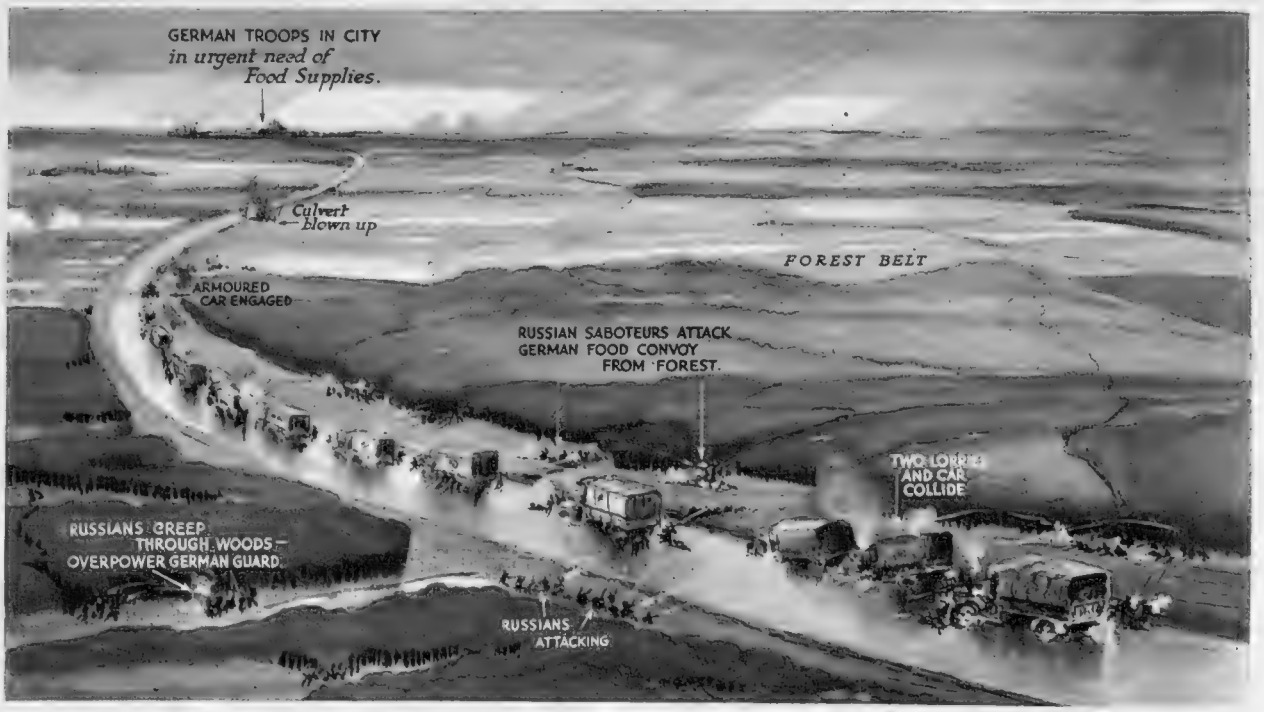

**NIGHT-TIME: WHEN ONE OF THE HEAVY GERMAN THREE-DAY ASSAULTS IS ACTUALLY IN PROGRESS: Having stormed through the first night, by the time the second night comes the tank crews must rest before pushing on again at dawn of the third day**—*Drawing by L. Ashwell Wood*

The enemy's units are here shown moving up from an already captured Russian city during a big push. The storm troops and cruiser tanks, having reached the second night of strenuous endeavour, must halt for sleep. The regular infantry and other units are likewise halted behind them. A second batch of storm troops, having rested the previous night, are now ready to continue; but time and strain are already beginning to tell upon them

forced to seek the temporary shelter of those tanks, or houses, or trenches, before proceeding cautiously on foot to assault the Russian positions.

As for the Russian method with infantry, we know even less. We have read and seen pictures of Russian infantry being transported to the "front" in lorries and trains, but not of their actual tactics in battle. So far, however, there does not seem to be much evidence of real trench-digging on either side (Vernon Bartlett said the trenches he saw were very shallow), and we may assume that the Russian infantryman has also been fighting a mobile battle in the main—what may be described as a series of rearguard actions in depth. There have been few occasions when he has been able to stand for long in the open; but several where he has held up the Germans for a long time before massive blockhouses and pill-boxes of concrete, armed with powerful guns. Apart from that, he has had to fight a great deal like a guerilla, roaming the country in small bands after being cut off from headquarters by the German thrusts. Then, a notable feature of the campaign, there has been the excellent co-operation between the Russian artillery and infantry. Perhaps the Russians have done better with artillery than with any other weapon, and the infantry has repeatedly taken advantage of this.

Donald Cowie




**THE DANGER TO THE GERMAN LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS, under the menace of Russian sabotage**—*Drawing by Percy Home*

The special troops which the Russians have trained for work behind the enemy's lines are a constant danger to the Germans. The town in the background, occupied by German troops, is short of food: in response to urgent calls to the rear, a German food convoy is formed and despatched towards the town. But Russian saboteurs have got wind of this and have occupied positions in a forest belt which at one point encloses the road to the town. As this is obviously a point of danger, German guards have been placed at one or two points, but they are overpowered by sudden rushes from the depths of the forest. All the byways through the closely-grown forest are known to the saboteur troops; they silently approach the guard posts and overpower them before their presence has been discovered. The armoured cars which protect the head of the convoy are allowed to pass: then, from several forest alleyways, the Russian parties burst out on to the wide grassy edges which line the road. There are gullies and ditches alongside the road, and into these some of the lorries charge, as they are hit by bombs. Two of the lorries collide, and a carload of officers is also involved. A culvert ahead of the convoy is also blown up by a swift attack. Overpowering the guards and drivers, the saboteurs make off with as many of the lorries as time permits. Knowledge of the local terrain again permits them to score; they can make use of a rough road through the forest which would not be known to the Germans

# DE GAULLE ALSO KNOWS ABOUT TANKS . . .

*Are We Using General de Gaulle as much as We Might, Both for the Good of his Country and of Our Own? A Suggestion for the Creation of a General Staff to Deal with Mechanisation Alone*

By FERDINAND TUOHY

THIS is a tank war, says Stalin to Lord Beaverbrook. But it 's also an aeroplane war, queries Lord Beaverbrook of Stalin. It will finish by being an aero-tank war, sums up Stalin.

With all this talk of amateur strategists and armchair critics (though few who matter, I should say, do their thinking in armchairs but alertly over typewriters), making new suggestions is becoming a risky business. The pitfall is smartness.

The constant propounding by the sound and by the smart alike has promoted a division of opinion among the reasoning sections of the community. One school says: "Leave it to those who 've got the inner facts. They alone are in a position to reckon what can be done, and when and how." The second school says: "That 's all very well, but it 's leaving the war too much to appreciations that may be faulty. The whole bunch on top needs constant gingering, and the only way to keep them anywhere near up to the mark is by constant

**THE VOICE OF FREEDOM:** On the eve of the five-minute national protest strike which General de Gaulle called in France for four o'clock on October 31, the Free French leader broadcast a call to his countrymen. "France is preparing for vengeance under her tattered flags," he said. "France with us"

criticism." Democracy at war; with the Germans and with itself.

Well, this isn't going to be the heavy think-stuff. It 's just about tanks.

Some of you may have seen a recent picture in which General de Gaulle was shown making an address in a tank factory in the Midlands. He was part of the chorus of the hour, calling for tanks, tanks, tanks, and, his exhortation finished, the General returned to Free French Headquarters in London, there to occupy himself with the martyrs of Nantes and Bordeaux.

Now, some people in this country and in America are none too keen on General de Gaulle. Here, the tendency is to mention "Dakar," perhaps a trifle darkly. In the United States, there seems to be a suspicion that he is out for some form of authoritarian rule. Maybe that 's the reason M. Hauck, Labour Director on the new Free French Committee of Nine, has been saying in New York that those grouped round de Gaulle desire that "the reconstruction of France shall not be made on the totalitarian model or upon that of Hitler's New Order, but on the principles of democracy and freedom as enunciated in the Atlantic Charter." My final impressions were that young France wanted more authority than the Third Republic had been giving. It also seems pretty obvious that the first steps of the new France will call for the exercise of quite a deal of authority. But all this is little of our business anyway. What is our business is this: Are we using General de Gaulle as much as we might, both for the good of his country and of our own?

Within a day or two of that tank occasion in a Midland factory, it was being pointed out that expert knowledge of mechanised warfare is as yet unrepresented on the Army Council. Yet, to have a reasonable chance of ultimate victory, we must fashion a predominantly mechanised army. But where are the new military minds to be found who 'd be capable of fulfilling its potentialities?

In the West End of London you can find one to go on with. There sits daily a Frenchman who was first—first—in the field in this whole business of Panzer divisions and 20 m.p.h. armies. All the world knows how the German General Guderian read Major de Gaulle's little book setting forth how the coming war should be fought and with what weapons; and how Hitler gave his General Staff carte blanche to go ahead at a time when the Weygands and the Gamelins and the Pétains preferred in their superior wisdom to brush de Gaulle aside as an impracticable dreamer—"*fumiste*" was, I think, the word used.

That was as long ago as 1934. What were we doing then? Mr. Baldwin was prating about building an air force equal to any within striking distance of our shores, and locating Britain's new frontier on the Rhine. In the War Office sat successive Chiefs of the General Staff who still regarded the tank as an interesting adjunct to the infantry, capable of being useful on occasions, governed by considerations of terrain, weather and the nature of one's opponent. Sequel: Lord Gort had twenty-three fairly serviceable tanks in 1940. And five Panzer divisions against him.

But in Paris seven years ago a Major aged 43, who had long been Pétain's A.D.C., had thought it all out—what supervened in Poland and in the Western *Blitzkrieg*, and what we have not ceased to read about in despatches from the Russian Front. We too had our "*fumistes*"—a Fuller—if they didn't fasten things securely down in print as did de Gaulle. Fuller long ago pressed for intensive mechanisation when he was Ironside's Chief of Staff. Military prescience, and heaven knows it is too rare to waste or to pass over.

General de Gaulle tells how France confronted the Germans with 3,000 tanks, many of them obsolete, and ran into 10,000 of the enemy's. He could relate too how Weygand turned a deaf ear during crucial operations even as he had done long before over the very notion of giving priority to the construction of armoured divisions. In early June of 1940 de Gaulle pressed to be given every available tank—they would reach the thousand figure—so that he might form an independent force and fling it at the advancing Germans. Not many of those tanks

**THE LEADER OF THE FREE FRENCH AND HIS PRINCIPAL COADJUTORS IN BRITAIN:** This picture was taken during the Five Minutes' Silence proclaimed by General de Gaulle in honour of the hostages shot by the Germans in Nantes. It shows the following members of the Free French National Committee in London—from left to right: M. Diethelm, Commissioner for Information; M. Dejean, Commissioner for Foreign Affairs; Admiral Muselier; General de Gaulle; Professor Cassin, Commissioner for Education and Fine Arts; M. Pleven, Commissioner for Co-ordination; and General Valin, Head of the Free French Air Force

would have survived, nor probably their leader; but confusion could have been spread in the enemy ranks at a moment vital to the regrouping of the French and British armies.

All de Gaulle was given was an armoured brigade on the Oise, yet with this small tank force he managed to check the German Panzers during three critical days. This fact is of importance now—that the General not only evolved the theory of the separate armoured formation and its use, as we have seen events materialise in this war, but that he brilliantly led one such formation in desperate battle. In between being called to Paris as Under-Secretary for War.

I cannot see any other country wasting this soldier's special talents as we have done. If he were just a brainy French general, one could, perhaps, understand it. But that he should be *the* recognised creative mind of the new mechanised warfare and still go unrecognised as such by the British General Staff is hard to swallow.

Ought there to be a special side of the General Staff concentrating on armoured forces? Should there be created a Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff, who would be a man of mechanised qualifications, with a seat on the Army Council? To suggest a Frenchman as Vice-Chief of the British General Staff for the duration, or until he proved himself good or bad, would, of course, bowl everyone over as too revolutionary a proposal, but one sees small reason why the experiment should not be attempted of harnessing General de Gaulle's unique specialistic ability to the debating table of the Army Council.

Or, failing that, why the General should not be invited to lead one of the armoured corps which clearly lie just round the corner. His personal value at the head of such a corps, should we one day pass to a landing in France, great or small, requires no elaboration. Moreover, our Army is very largely untried, though destined to be pitted against the most tried army of modern Europe. We need every expert soldier of high battle experience.

I see the Blimps going purple: a foreigner in the seats of the mighty at the War Office—what would be his position in respect of his Majesty—and how could the Army Council make room for him—by increasing from seven to eight members?—unthinkable—and so forth—but the war is going seriously and, unorthodoxy or not, here we have a man capable of helping greatly, but whom we do not use in his true province.

General de Gaulle is doing big work already. With the exception of Dakar, it is hard to see how he could have done more. And just what was "Dakar"? That expedition was doomed in the chat-boxes of the town. One day we'll realise how it was unnecessary for Hitler to maintain spies in Britain in this war, of the grading and number Germany did in the last. With privileged pro-Axis listeners in the choicest quarters, things like "Dakar" leak out. And governments like Vichy, forewarned, are able to send in advance shiploads of hand-picked defenders to the threatened coast.

General de Gaulle has flown or steamed tens of thousands of miles and has lashed together in the Allied cause a most useful portion of the French Empire, the latest testimony to his work in this direction being the presence of an American Mission at Brazzaville. From Britain, de Gaulle commands the Free French effort everywhere. In France herself he has been largely instrumental in raising the national spirit from the ashes, for he is a fine speaker, which is luck.

A year ago any incorporation of the General in the British fighting organisation would have caused Vichy to redouble its chorus of "lackey of England" and the effect might have been to lessen the worth and weight of de Gaulle's addresses to the French people. But to-day there is no such risk. This stout character is firmly and permanently implanted in the hearts and minds of a great majority of his fellow-countrymen and women (not forgetting the children), and were these to learn that his talents would henceforth find an outlet on that body—the Army Council—charged with supervising preparations for Allied land effort, they would be both proud and heartened.

"*C'est logique*" they would agree, "that the General should be so used. It is proved that had France followed him over tanks, huge, swiftly moving clashes would have told a different story. Now the British want to build up what the French didn't possess. So they use the man who forecast things in a big, imaginative manner."

The Free French Movement would not suffer. Its Chief could still address great meetings at the Albert Hall, his voice could still be heard in France. Here is a man in the full vitality of fifty who could with ease double tank work with his position as head of a great cause. The recent establishment of the National Committee of Nine guarantees this. Mention of five names alone—Cassin, Pleven, Muselier, Diethelm, Dejean—the last by no means least—shows that the work could go on in plenitude were General de Gaulle's abilities employed in part in another sphere.

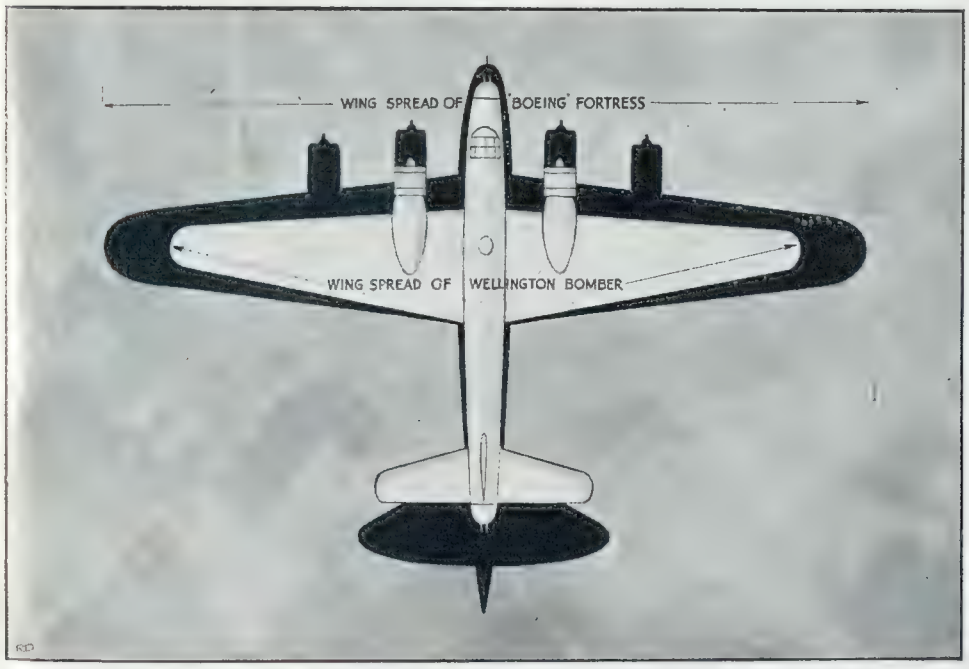
# TWO BOMBER PROBLEMS

*Speed versus Size and Height versus Load*

Drawings by Roland Davies

**SPEED VERSUS SIZE IN REGARD TO THE BOMBERS' VULNERABILITY TO ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE**

The fast, but very large, four-engined bomber has a speed, let us say, of about 320 m.p.h. Consequently, the "time target" presented to the A.-A. gunners is comparatively small; on the other hand, the actual target area of the four-engined monster is very considerable. Compare this type with the smaller and slower twin-engined bomber pictured in the lower part of the upper drawing. The target area is very considerably smaller than in the case of the four-engined aircraft, but owing to its lower speed of about 265 m.p.h., the "time target" is so much greater

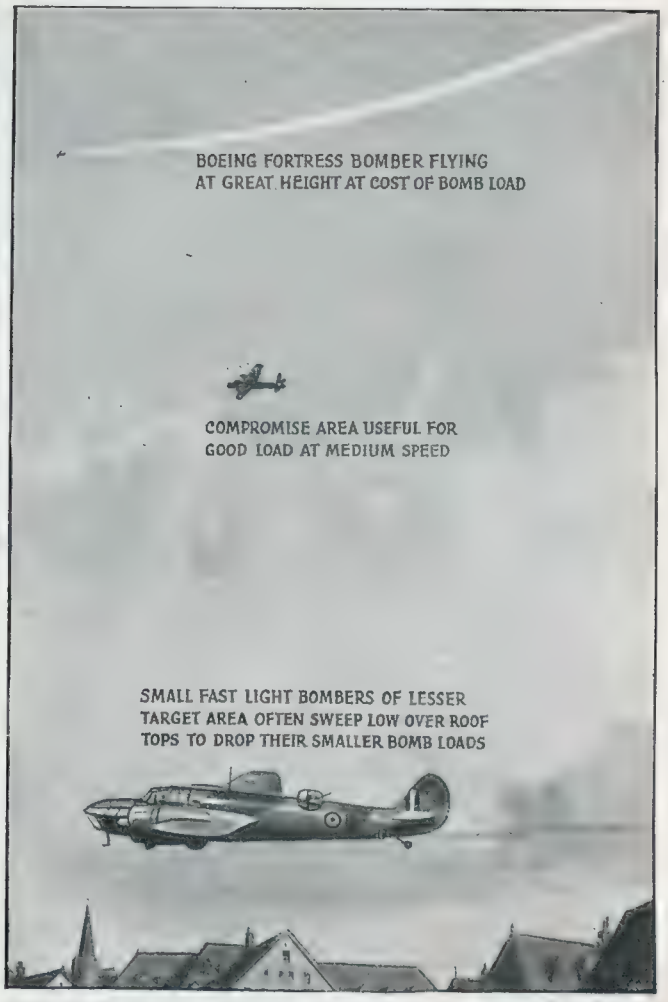



**THE WING-SPAN OF A FLYING FORTRESS AS COMPARED WITH THAT OF A WELLINGTON:** The Wellington is 86 ft. 1 in. in span; the Fortress 103 ft. 9 ins.; in addition, the Fortress has four engines to the Wellington's two—thus presenting four points of extreme vulnerability! As against this, it is not unlikely that the Fortress would normally fly at a much greater height than the Wellington

WITH the many different types of bombers now at the disposal of the Royal Air Force for operational duties, quite a number of interesting problems are being presented to pilots and air crews. Two of them are represented here in diagram form.

Normally, one would assume that the faster the bombing aircraft, the more the crew would like it, as their period in the air (and thus the time they are exposed to anti-aircraft attack) would be reduced for any given flight. Yet it has been reported that many pilots prefer *slower* aircraft, so long as they are *smaller*—the argument being, of course, that the new huge, four-engined bombers present so great a target to the A.-A. guns and are, therefore, so much more vulnerable.

Another problem which vitally concerns the bomber—and especially the day bomber—is that of height versus load. The Boeing Flying Fortress, for instance, has been designed to operate at extreme heights: this may reduce the bomb-load, but obviously it increases the safety of crew and aircraft. For bombing from medium heights, an increase in speed is necessary if a reasonable measure of safety is to be observed: when bombing from very low levels, an ever greater increase in speed is desirable so that the necessarily smaller load of bombs can be dropped with precision from almost roof-top level.




**THE PROBLEM OF HEIGHT VERSUS LOAD:** The three main considerations are here indicated in diagram form

C

# AN UNCONVENTIONAL U.S. FIGHTER

*Full Details of the American-Built Airacobra, the New Fighter Aircraft of the R.A.F. Now in Actual Service in This Country*

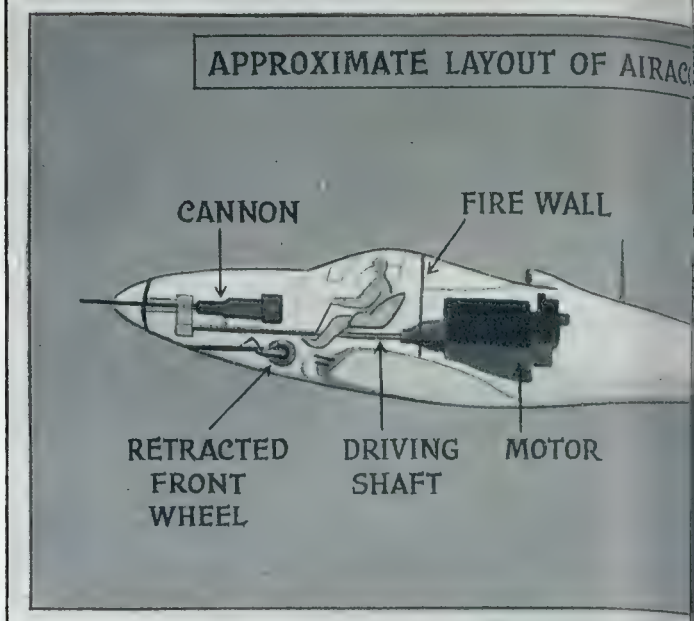
**THE AIRACOBRA IN FLIGHT: An impressive picture of the R.A.F.'s American-built fighter which can put up a performance similar to that of a Spitfire**

AMONGST the fighter aircraft which the R.A.F. have received from the United States, the Airacobra ranks very high indeed. To begin with, it is of the most unorthodox design—it has a tricycle undercarriage; its engine is *behind* the pilot, and its propeller is driven by a long shaft; it is perhaps the first purely fighter aircraft to boast a full-length door—just like a motor-car! But, in addition to these virtues, the Airacobra has a terrific performance: although not faster than our own Spitfire at its rated height, at lower levels the American-built aircraft *is* the faster; and its fire-power is considered very good indeed.

Now for actual facts concerning performance and design—a maximum speed of 400 m.p.h. is claimed, although this figure is probably less when the aircraft is fully armed and equipped up to R.A.F. requirements; in the U.S.A. a cruising speed of 325 m.p.h. and a service ceiling of 36,000 ft. are also claimed. The Airacobra is a single-seat monoplane, with low wing; its engine is a 1,150 h.p. Allison; it is the fourteenth modification of the original design.

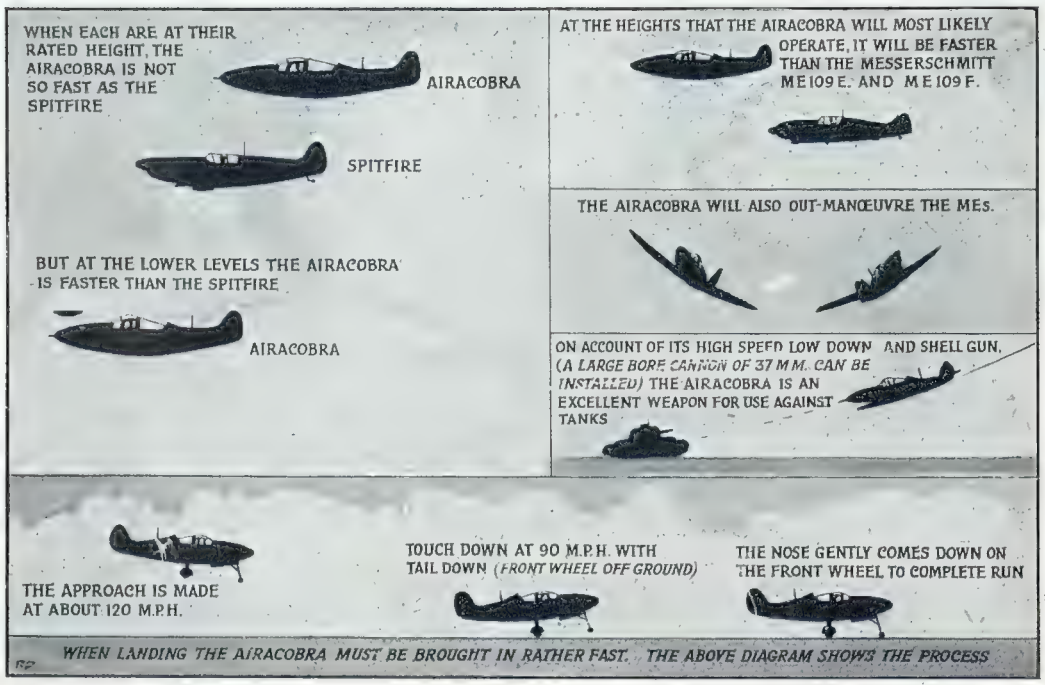
For armament there are the following: one 20 mm. cannon-gun firing through the airscrew boss; two 0·50 in. machine-guns also firing through the airscrew disc; and four 0·300 machine-guns in the wings.

**THE NOSE OF THE AIRACOBRA:** Although you can't see it, there *is* a propeller! It is revolving flat out, however, and is thus invisible. In the centre of the airscrew boss is the 20 mm. cannon-gun—one of the seven weapons with which this fine aircraft is equipped



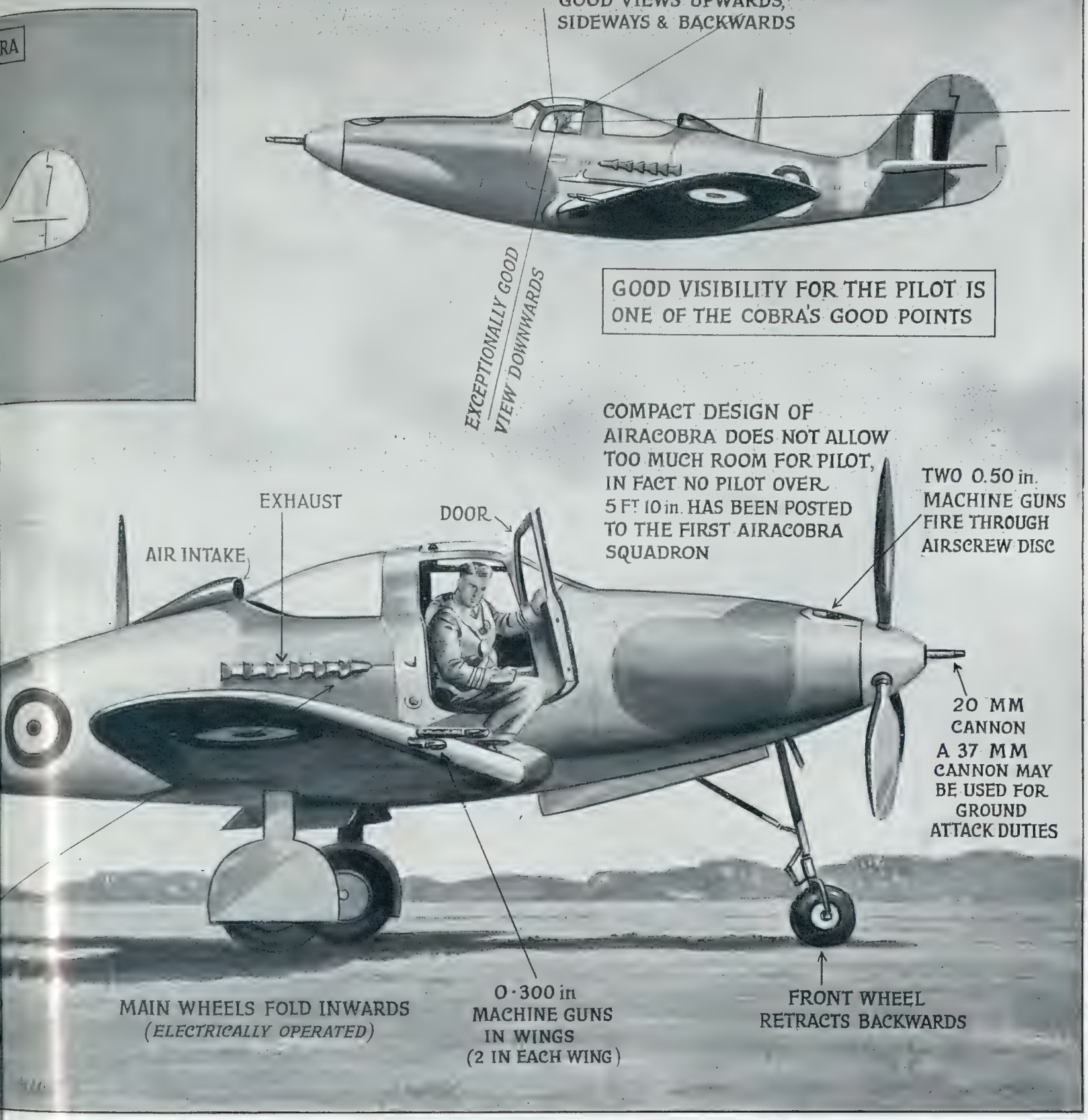
**THE PRINCIPAL CONSTRUCTIONAL DETAILS OF THE BELL AIRA- undercarriage and shaft-driver**

First designed in 1938, the Airacobra is one of the most revolutionary fighter aircraft of to-day: the drawings reproduced here show its principal features and its principal virtues. Good visibility—of the utmost importance to a fighter pilot—is one of the Airacobra's virtues; there is good visibility upwards, sideways and backwards. Its compact design does not allow too much room for the pilot—in fact, no man of over 5 ft. 10 ins. in height has yet been posted to an Airacobra squadron: nor are fat men (or even plump) made welcome! Behind the pilot's cabin is the 1,150 h.p. engine; a "fire wall" insulates the cabin



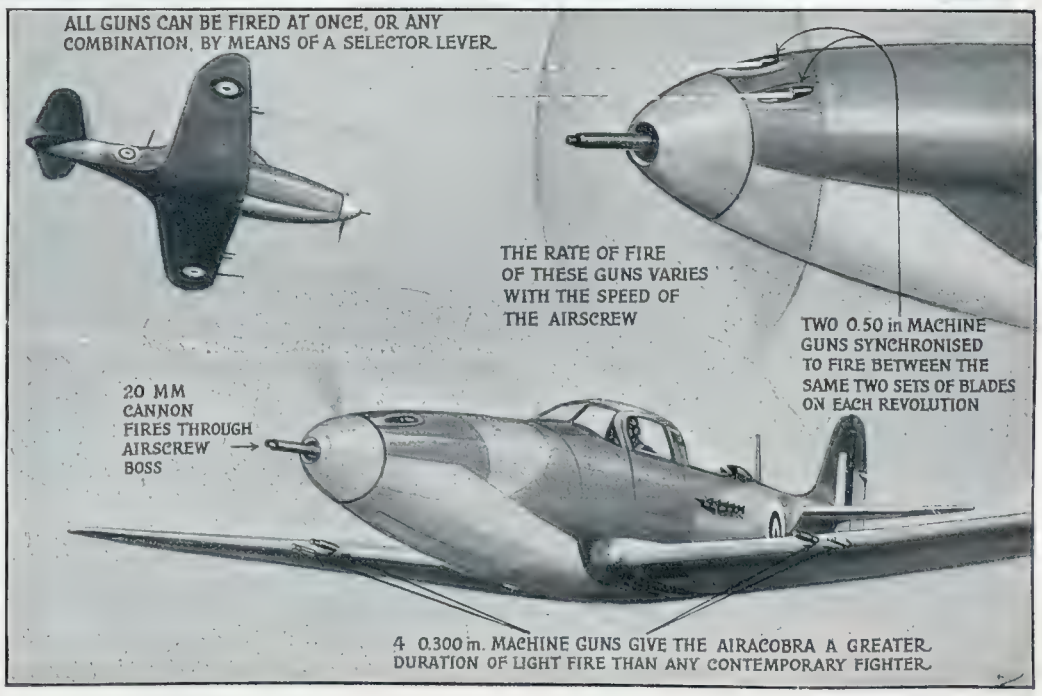

***On left*—POINTS OF IMPORTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE AIRACOBRA—*Drawing by Roland Davies***

At its rated height, the Airacobra is outclassed by the Spitfire: at lower levels, however, it is faster. At its best operational height the Airacobra is faster than the two latest-type Messerschmitts, and its manœuvrability is also greater. As, according to American sources, a large-bore 37 mm. cannon gun can be installed when necessary, the Airacobra would make a very excellent, low-flying, anti-tank aircraft; it possesses all the qualifications for such a weapon—high speed, manœuvrability, excellent visibility and terrific fire power. When landing, the usual procedure is to bring the aircraft in rather fast—at about 120 m.p.h.—and to touch down at about 90 m.p.h., on the two main wheels; the nose is then allowed to drop gently until the front wheel touches, when the landing run is then completed




**COBRA, the first fighter aircraft to be fitted with tricycle propeller**—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

from the engine, and the power from the latter is transmitted to the propeller by means of a shaft which passes beneath the pilot's seat. The tricycle undercarriage (unusual in a single-seat fighter) is of exceptional interest: the long front leg retracts backwards, and it is usual to pull this up the moment the aircraft has left the ground: the two main wheels fold inwards and are electrically operated, the process of retraction taking somewhat longer than in British-built aircraft. Details of the armament are given more fully in the drawing reproduced below on the right.




***On right*—THE FIRE-POWER OF THE AIRACOBRA**
*—Drawing by Roland Davies*

Fitted in the very nose of the aircraft is the 20 mm. cannon gun which fires through the airscrew boss. The two 0·50 in. machine guns are synchronized to fire between the same two sets of propeller blades on each revolution; whilst the four 0·300 in. machine guns give the Airacobra a greater duration of light fire than any other fighter of to-day. (Obviously, the rate of fire of the two 0·50 in. machine guns is controlled by the speed of the airscrew.) An interesting point is that all the guns can be fired at once, *or in any combination that the pilot may desire*: this is done by means of a selector lever, and is of importance when the conservation of ammunition is a consideration, as might happen during the course of a long patrol

**A STORY WHICH IS NOW PART OF MERCHANT SERVICE HISTORY: The salving of the tanker "San Demetrio," a feat which called forth praise from a Judge and the Elder Brethren of Trinity House**—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

"THE salvage of the *San Demetrio* gave occasion for acts of heroism which cannot be read without a thrill. She was one of the convoy escorted by the *Jervis Bay*, a motor-tanker of 8,073 gross tons, with a full cargo of petrol. She scattered with the others, but the pursuing raider concentrated his gunfire upon her, damaging her severely and starting fires on board. At the captain's order, the ship was abandoned, and a few minutes later she was struck by another salvo and burst into flames. The crew had left in three boats, and so they lost touch. In the night shells passed over them as the raider continued the chase and the bombardment of the merchant ships, but they escaped harm.

"During the whole of the first day, a boat commanded by the *San Demetrio's* second officer, Mr. Arthur Godfrey Hawkins, with fifteen other members of the crew, was kept head on to great seas. After two days they again sighted the tanker, still burning, with petrol floating on the water. The weather made close approach impossible, and the boat lay off all that night. With dawn, the weather moderated, a sail was hoisted, and by noon a perilous attempt at boarding succeeded. Fires raged fore and aft, and the tanker was glowing like a furnace amidships. Seamen of less courage and resource might have considered the position hopeless. The bridge had been destroyed, with all the surrounding structure; compasses, steering-gear, charts and wireless had gone; the one alternative method of control, the steering-gear aft, was partially destroyed, and the wheel had four spokes only. Holes made in the collision bulkhead resisted all efforts to plug them. The deck over the aft tanks was pierced in many places by shells and splinters, and with every roll of the ship spurts of petrol were shot into the air and washed over the decks, threatening further to extend the fires. Yet the ship was brought safely into port.

"All through the night of November 7-8 the boat's crew fought the fires, having, after about six hours' work, raised sufficient power to put the hose into action. Before midday the fires were mastered, and gradually they were extinguished. That afternoon the main engines were started. The problem of steering was solved by the construction of a temporary steering platform. With only four men on board competent to steer, exposure of lights prohibited, and the danger present of explosion from petrol or gas, which made the use of oil lamps impossible, the vessel ploughed along at a speed rising to nine knots. The salvors had no sextant, and kept to an easterly course by the Polar Star, with a check by the moon and the sun. It was deemed too dangerous to light the galley fire, and they lived mainly on monotonous meals of cold vegetables, 'but occasionally buckets of boiled onions and boiled potatoes came up, cooked on the main drain,' Mr. Hawkins afterwards stated.

"There was heroic work in the engine-room. Normally, its complement was fourteen men. Four only were available. These four carried on, overcoming every difficulty. One of them, John Boyle, a greaser, who did not live to see the vessel into port, had received grave injuries when getting into the boat as the *San Demetrio* was abandoned, but took his part in the engine-room for three days until strength failed him. His comrades moved him to one of the few cabins which had not been burnt out. The next morning they found him dead.

"The stricken ship, with a linen cloth as a distress signal, made a landfall on November 13. A party of naval officers and ratings were put on board, and assisted to bring the *San Demetrio* into port on November 16—with 16 ft. of water in her forehold, after a 700-miles' voyage from the point where she was boarded, and with 10,000 tons of her precious cargo of petrol still remaining in her. No wonder that Mr. Justice Langton and the Elder Brethren of Trinity House, sitting with him to adjudicate the salvage claim—they awarded £14,700—congratulated Mr. Hawkins and all his comrades on the magnificent services they had given."

*From* The Battle of the Seas, *by Sir Archibald Hurd (Hodder and Stoughton)*

***On right*—500 MILES IN AN OPEN BOAT ACROSS THE NORTH ATLANTIC, after a return to the doomed vessel to take off four men dangling from the ship's stern**—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

THE Chief Officer of a torpedoed British freighter, on his safe arrival at Reykjavik in Iceland a few days ago, related how he and twenty-eight other survivors sailed an open boat for nearly 500 miles across the North Atlantic in bitter cold to safety.

His ship was attacked west of Iceland while outward bound on her maiden voyage. "We were torpedoed in the middle of the night," he said.

"The crew of sixty got away in two boats, but we lost sight of each other almost immediately. I had to go back and fetch four men who were dangling from the ropes down the side of the ship, which sank a few minutes later.

"The only food we had was biscuits, chocolate and pemmican but luckily it rained on and off, so we had enough fresh water.

"All went well until a strong wind blew up from the east, forcing us to rig a sea anchor. For five days we were unable to make any progress. Then the wind changed. We had to bale continuously.

"I was the only man who knew anything about navigation, so I was kept pretty busy. Probably that is why I was not so badly affected as the others.

"By the twelfth day some of the men were feeling completely done in. One died when we were almost in sight of land."

The Chief Officer added that they were only 10 miles from the coast when they were found on the fourteenth day by a British plane, which guided the Icelandic trawler *Surprise* to the spot. The other boat with the thirty remaining members of the crew is still missing.

# "DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS"—IN WARTIME

*Three Epics of the Merchant Service Portrayed by "Sphere" Artists*

**THE EXHAUSTED CREW OF A BRITISH MERCHANT SHIP MAKE FAST TO THEIR BURNING SHIP!**—*Drawing by William MacDowell*

Fire broke out amongst the highly inflammable cargo of a British merchant ship crossing the Atlantic. For thirteen hours the crew fought a losing battle with the flames, until they were ready to drop with exhaustion. The fire broke out at 9 o'clock in the morning. Hoses and extinguishers were brought to bear. Men in smoke-helmets had to crawl over the top of the cargo to get at the seat of the fire. Meanwhile, the rest of the crew toiled frantically shifting scores of tons of cargo away from the danger area. Still the fire gained. The saloon deck caught fire and collapsed, burning many of the hoses. The hatches collapsed. There was only one small island on the port side from which the crew continued to fight the fire. The engineers had to leave the engine-room and the pumps ceased to work. The boats had been lowered some time before, to be out of reach of the fire. The captain now sent out a call for assistance and ordered the crew into the boats. He and the chief engineer remained on board to drop the confidential papers over the side. By this time the whole ship was blazing furiously. Captain and chief engineer leapt into the sea and swam to a boat. A patrolling American destroyer had heard the distress call, came to the rescue and picked them up. The second mate's lifeboat was missing. For six hours the American destroyer searched the rough sea, luridly lit through sheets of rain. At last the boat was found—in under the counter of the burning ship, still made fast by her painter. Every man in the boat was fast asleep, exhausted by their long fight with the fire They were all rescued

# The GORT DESPATCHES

## Some of the Lessons of the Fighting in Flanders in May 1940, as Revealed in the Two Despatches by the British Commander-in-Chief

*With Special Drawings and Diagrams and Explanatory Notes*

## (1) The VANISHING of REST AREAS

ONE of the most striking aspects of the New Warfare described in Lord Gort's Despatches (and also in *The Battle of Flanders* by Ian Hay, the more popular exposition of the B.E.F.'s experiences in France and Flanders in 1940), is that of the changed conditions experienced in 1940 behind the actual battle front.

In the Great War of 1914-18 there were zones of increasing safety as one moved towards the rear; and in these zones were Rest Areas for the troops who had been either attacking or resisting the enemy in the forward trench areas. To-day, however, no real rest areas exist anywhere.

In order to bring out the differences between the fighting in the Great War and the conditions which exist in the fighting of to-day the two drawings reproduced here have been specially prepared.

The first drawing shows the old conditions of 1914-18. In the background is the fighting trench-area—the old front line. Extending towards the foreground are the communication trenches—not very safe areas, as many will still remember! Then come the pock-marked roads, broken by craters, formed occasionally by bombs, but mainly by shell-fire. Proceeding still further towards the foreground, an area of comparative safety is reached. The limits of the day-to-day gunfire had been passed in this area, and troops could find rest in farmhouses and such other buildings as had escaped damage. Proceeding still further from the front line, small towns provided the troops with some of the amenities of life.

"In the last war," writes Ian Hay, "the troops were either in action or back at rest; and when they were back at rest, they really rested. Thousands of middle-aged and elderly Britons can recall to-day grateful memories of pleasant billets in Bethune and Bailleul, or Arras, where exhausted units would make good their deficiencies and recruit their energy. But to-day all that is gone. . . ."

In the second drawing the conditions of to-day are depicted. Certain sections of the Army are occupying the forward battle zone: tanks and armoured vehicles of various kinds are engaged in deadly combat, with similar weapons thrusting forward from enemy-occupied territory. A little to the rear may be found numbers of gun batteries grouped along the edge of woods, seeking to conceal their positions from the prying enemy aircraft. Infantry reserves either in, or standing by, their motorised transport vehicles will also be seeking any natural cover which the district provides. Supplies will be endeavouring to reach the various components of the Army by such roadways as still exist. Ammunition columns, which had been living a hazardous life on their way to their particular destinations, and food supplies must at some time or other reach the troops. At the same time both sides will be endeavouring to cut the lines of communication. And massed tank thrusts on any given point must be rapidly met by a concentration of resistance by other tanks and guns. The rear areas, although free of the enemy to a great extent, may yet be penetrated by parachutists or saboteurs endeavouring to filter their way into the rearward area.

"There are no real rest areas anywhere," continues Ian Hay. "Troops can no longer congregate in centres of population; they must be dispersed in small contingents all over the countryside, separated from their nearest neighbour by a mile or so of field and plough, wrapped by night in an impenetrable black-out . . ."

**BEHIND THE BATTLEFIELD IN FLANDERS—1914-18**—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

As one came back from the trenches, one passed successively through the area of communication trenches and the "reserve trenches" to areas of comparative quiet; then out to the real Rest Area; and finally to the villages and towns where one had a definite and welcome respite from the ardours of warfare. To-day all this has gone . . .

**THE VANISHING OF REST AREAS IN THE WARFARE OF TO-DAY**—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

To begin with, to-day there is no "front line": there is only a "war zone," where tanks and mobile guns and motorised infantry roam wherever they choose. And, above all, there are aircraft—fighters, bombers and dive-bombers. To-day there is no Rest Area: the whole fighting zone is liable to invasion, bombing, hand-to-hand combat . . .

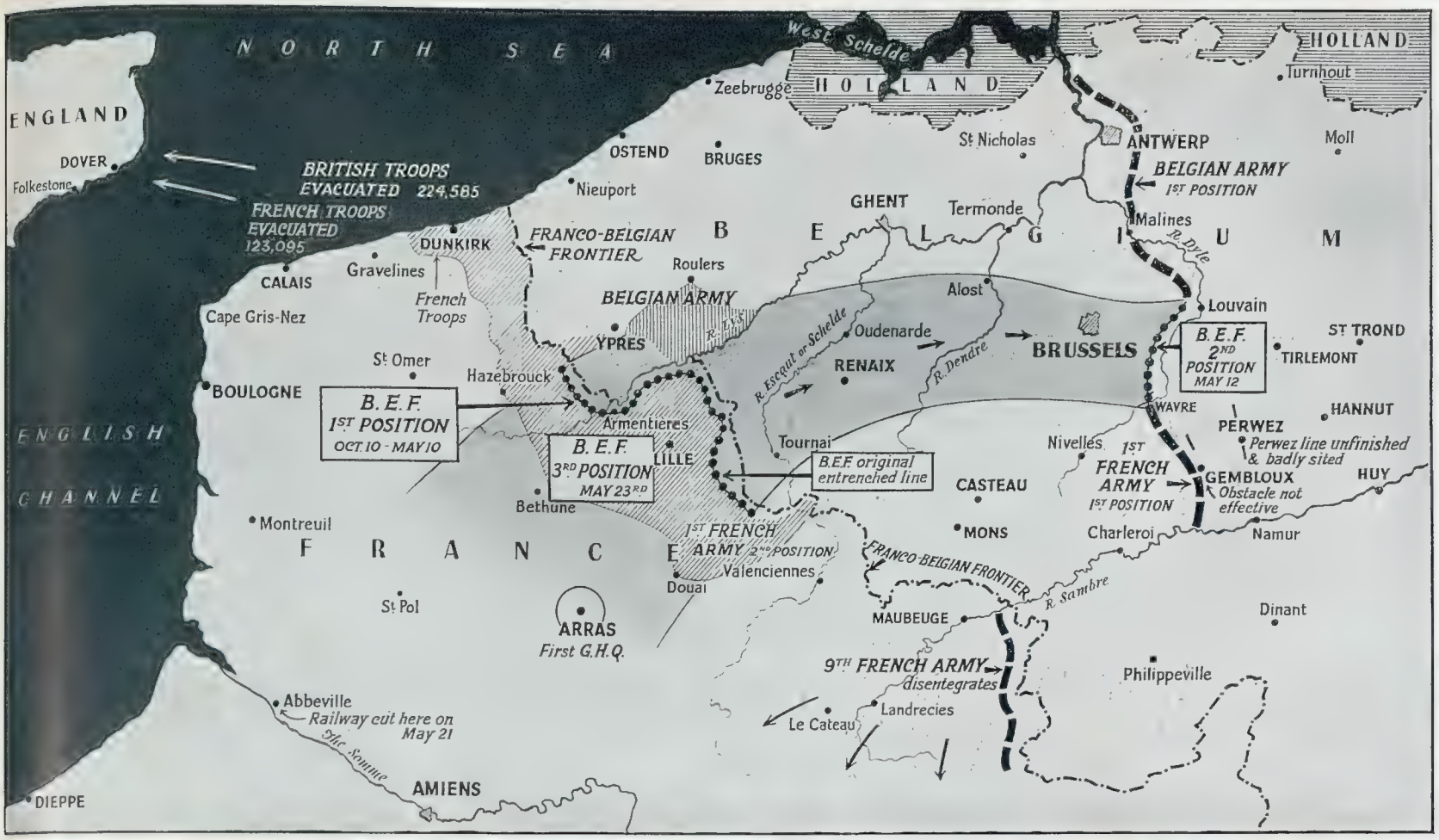
## (2) The NATURE of the REARWARD AREA

*Eventually Cut by the German Panzer Thrusts*

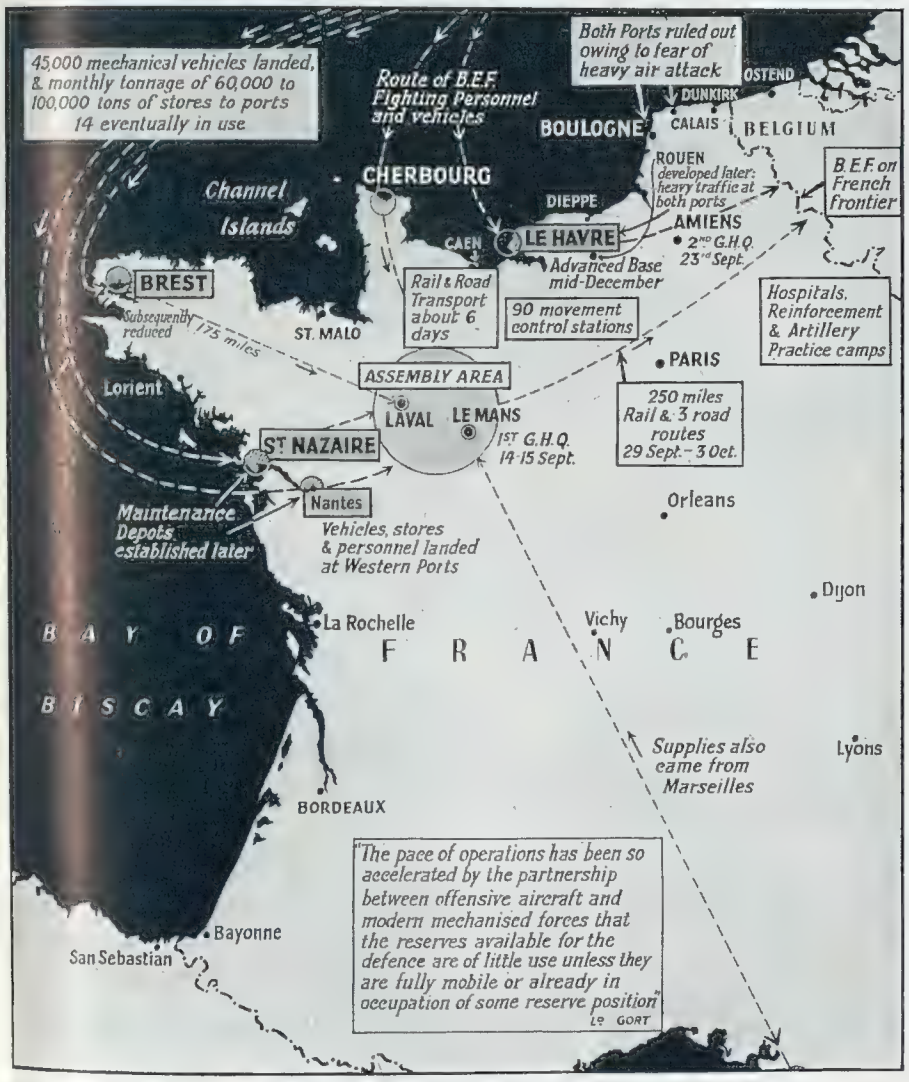
AN examination of the opening chapters of Lord Gort's Despatches reveals how the Rearward Area of the British Expeditionary Force was formed. So instructive is this section of the Despatches, in view of the danger of the severance of communications under modern conditions of warfare, that an endeavour is here made to picture diagrammatically some of the salient features of this Rearward Area.

The examination reveals a great number of interesting points: We see firstly the abandonment of the Channel ports owing to the possibility of air attacks in force, and the use of the ports of Western France in their place. It will be seen, on reference to the specially prepared map reproduced *on the right*, that the B.E.F. was in the main landed at Cherbourg, Nantes, St. Nazaire (developed by the Americans in the last war), and Brest: later, further ports were in use, until the number rose to some fourteen and seventeen. Men, stores and mechanised vehicles thus poured in on scores of quaysides; and all of them had to reach an "Assembly Area" between Laval and Le Mans. Vehicles travelled along the roads at wide intervals, and everything and everybody were dispersed as a precaution against an air attack (which, however, never developed, as only high-flying reconnaissance was practised by the enemy at this time!). The drivers learned how to use the French roads, and much useful experience was gained by all branches "in the largest road movement ever undertaken with motor transport by any British Army."

It was, however, clear that the distances from the landing quays to the positions actually held by the B.E.F. in and around the Lille salient were very great for the type of Rearward Area which the B.E.F. set out to form. By October 3 and 10 the various corps of the B.E.F. had reached and taken up their positions along the sinuous portion of the Franco-Belgian front which had been allotted to them.




**THE ADVANCE OF THE B.E.F. INTO BELGIUM, from the French frontier to the line of the Dyle, and the retreat from that position back to the old one on May 23 :** The entrenched line just inside the Franco-Belgian frontier was abandoned for the dash into Belgium on May 10. Thirteen days later, however, the B.E.F. were back at the same position, and part of the old defence area was held by troops firing from these very trenches where they had sat all through the winter of 1939-40 !




**THE REARWARD AREA BEHIND THE BRITISH LINES IN FRANCE :** For the comparatively small length of line held by the B.E.F., the lines of communication stretched backward to Le Mans, Brest and St. Nazaire ! This was because of the threat of air attack. Later, Le Havre was employed as a landing-point—but even this was a great distance from the front (See *accompanying notes*)

There appeared to be no expectation of any attack by the enemy, and the perfecting of the Rearward Area was steadily proceeded with.

By mid-November the strain of distance brought about the use of Le Havre as an advance base area. After that, things moved more easily and rapidly. By mid-December fourteen ports were in use and 45,000 mechanised vehicles had been landed ! Time could now be found to grapple with the difficulties presented by great numbers of French evacuees, and by the daily incursion of 10,000 Belgian beet harvesters across the frontier (giving ample opportunity for spying !). Liaison between Headquarters was never easy, entailing much personal riding in cars from one point to another, and altogether Lord Gort and his administrative staff did not have an easy time of it during the very hard winter of 1939-40. By that time a Force of 222,200 men was being housed in this very widely-stretched Rearward Area.

## (3) INTO BELGIUM—and OUT of it AGAIN!

THE above diagrammatic map has been drawn to show the movements of the British Expeditionary Force as set out in Lord Gort's Despatches, and to indicate the extent to which the Force retired to the exact region which it had held for seven months prior to the great German onslaught in May of last year.

The map shows the forward line of the area held by the B.E.F. close to the Belgian frontier and extending from a point north-east of Hazebrouck to a point north-east of Douai. A great deal of entrenching took place all along this line, which was not straight, but occupied, as it were, a large salient, part of which fronted the River Lys and the busy commercial and manufacturing city of Lille lying in the centre of this large salient.

On May 10, at 1 p.m., the B.E.F. began moving towards the position allocated to it along the River Dyle, extending from Louvain to Wavre. This position was occupied on the 12th, but owing to enemy pressure to the north and the south, especially in the region of Gembloux and still farther south in the region of Maubeuge and Landrecies, where, in fact, the Ninth French Army disintegrated, Lord Gort was compelled to retire by a series of movements to the area indicated by a different tint. This is marked "3rd position" on the map, and indicates diagrammatically the area held by the B.E.F. and the First French Army on May 23.

It takes roughly the form of a booted leg, and it is of particular interest to note that not only was it once more wholly in French territory, but its north-eastern face was apparently occupying exactly the entrenched line which had been dug during the months immediately following the B.E.F.'s arrival in October 1939, though this point is not stressed in the Gort Despatches.

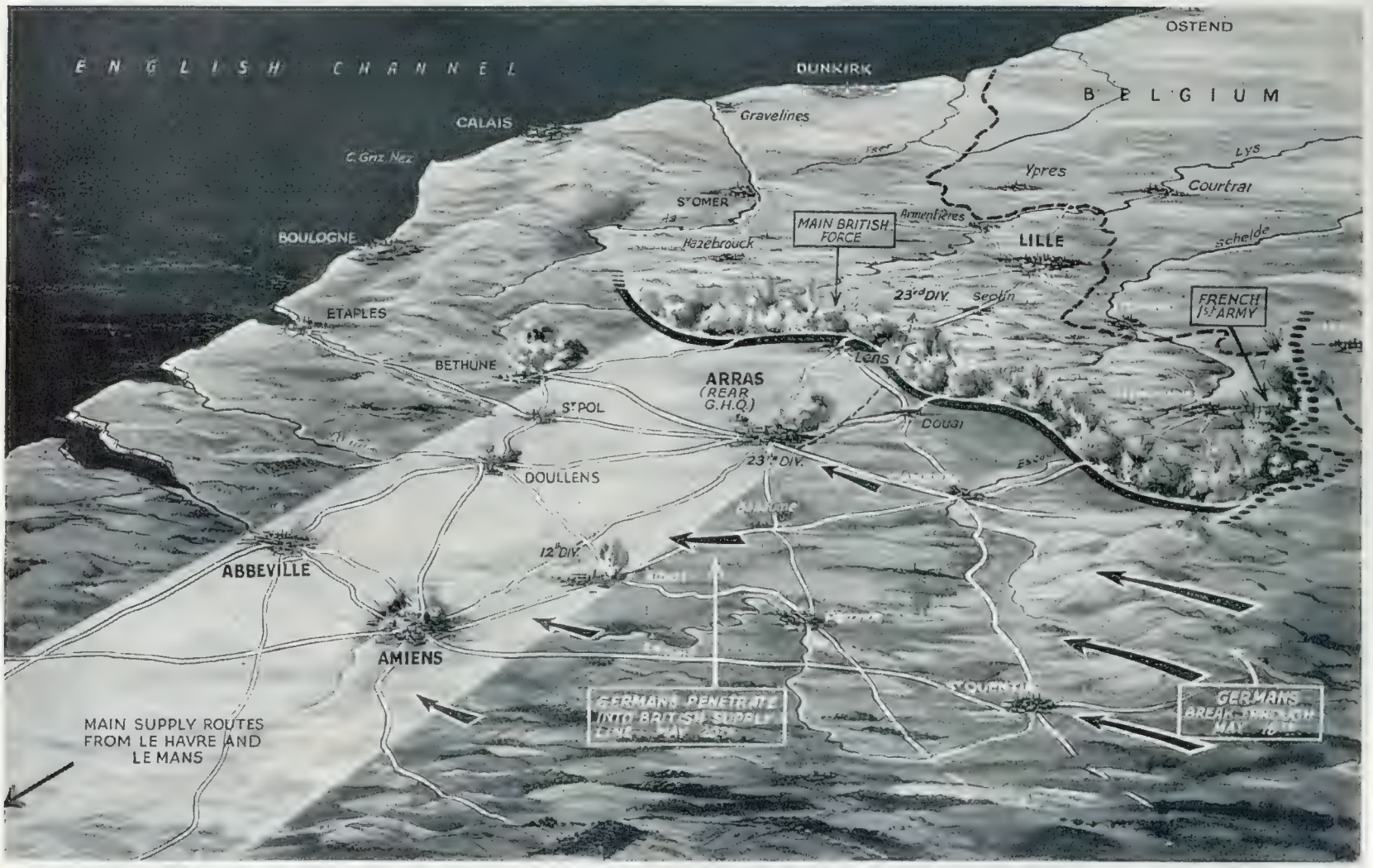
On May 23, the area south of Douai, Bethune and Hazebrouck had been cut by the enemy Panzer divisions, and the only line of retreat lay through the narrow corridor here indicated. The First French Army was staving off enemy attack at the heel of this area, but the most vicious Panzer attack occurred on the face northward of Bethune. Here the enemy sought again and again to pierce the B.E.F.'s left flank by every road, lane and natural crevice, but by a series of brilliant stoppages with very limited material, no destructive break-through was permitted to occur.

Together the French and British troops steadily retreated towards the shore. That they would all embark somehow, for somewhere, was taken for granted, though no preparations for any French sea evacuation had been made. The situation was met by allotting certain beaches to the French, and after some vehicular difficulties when 100,000 French troops entered the perimeter. The miracle was consummated by nearly all these men finding themselves upon the flat, sandy beaches to the east and west of Dunkirk, the most northerly point in French territory, during the days following.

What was to be done to solve the question of embarkation ? "Orders," says Ian Hay, "were subsequently received from home that British and French troops were to embark in equal proportions—a quixotic but characteristic decision." Actually, the embarkation of the B.E.F. took place from the long beach east of Dunkirk, while the embarkation of the French troops took place to the west of the port.

During the period from May 28 to June 3, nearly 200,000 British troops were rescued from the beaches and from the much-bombed quays of Dunkirk itself. When this task was accomplished, some 136,000 French troops were conveyed to this country by the same small craft which had achieved such marvels during the preceding days. Those who desire to study in detail this final episode of the B.E.F.'s baptism of modern warfare can turn to the pages of Mr. John Masefield's narrative entitled *The Nine Days' Wonder*.

# LESSONS OF THE FIGHTING IN FLANDERS *(Continued)*




**THE VULNERABILITY OF LINES OF COMMUNICATION IN THE TYPE OF WARFARE WE ARE EXPERIENCING TO-DAY: As exemplified in the break in our own Lines when the French 9th Army disintegrated in the middle of May 1940**—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

## PENETRATION BY PANZERS

THE preservation of an army's Communications has, of course, always been a matter of the most vital concern to a military commander. Fortunately for the B.E.F., the expenditure of ammunition had not been heavy in the opening days of the campaign in Flanders—otherwise the situation when the French 9th Army collapsed would have been hazardous indeed.

The above bird's-eye view has been drawn to indicate diagrammatically the situation which arose between May 20 and May 23, when no Allied line as such existed south of the French 1st Army, which was holding a position north of Cambrai. Between that position and Péronne was an open gateway, through which German Panzer divisions were pouring. With the reinforcement of three British divisions, 12th, 23rd and 46th, and with such other extemporised defence units as Lord Gort could gather in from the Zone of Communications (which is here shown as a lighter shaded band), the Commander of the B.E.F. was enabled to establish a southern line, guarding the area which extended from the Eastern Battle area to the sea at Dunkirk.

The zone of communication, which extended right down to the southern ports of Nantes and St. Nazaire, was not surrendered without a brilliantly sustained struggle. Arras and St. Pol, for example, were defended with courage and tenacity—a Mobile Bath Unit, we are told, playing a distant part in the defence of the latter, while general Construction Companies of the Royal Engineers and units of the R.A.S.C. placed their own localities in a state of defence and manned them until they were overwhelmed, relieved, or ordered to withdraw. Fortunately, a considerable number of these units were able to gain the Northern area, when the zone of communication was finally and completely broken.

Very wisely, several days' reserve had been maintained north of the Somme and provided extra supplies. From about May 21 the Force had to exist entirely on the supplies which it was carrying within its own lines!

**THE GEMBLOUX LINE, WHICH DELAYED THE ENEMY FOR ONLY A MOMENT: This was the "Defence Line" which was supposed to form "a practically impassable barrier to tanks"!**

We quote from *Belgium*, an official account published some little time ago by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs by way of explanation of what occurred when the Germans invaded the Low Countries: "A formidable steel barrier divides the interior of the country and forms a practically impassable barrier to probable attacks by armoured tanks. The wall of steel constructed by our untrained builders is at present 70 km. long. It represents a weight of over 30,000 tons; 34,000 tons of steel framework, 1,000 tons of steel cables, 150 tons of camouflage colouring, and about 600 tons of various materials. Thus, 35,000 tons of steel have been put in position in open country, across fields, woods and marshes, floods, rivers and railways, leaving no loophole for the assailant.

"Every difficulty has been overcome—gradients, mud, water. Neither rain nor snow nor cold have stopped the work for one second."

**HOW THE B.E.F. ENTERED BELGIUM ON MAY 10, 1940:** Lord Gort writes: "It was ascertained that the 12th Royal Lancers could be ready to cross the frontier at 10 p.m., and accordingly I laid down this time as zero hour. . . . The Belgian population received the Allied armies in the most cordial manner, and in particular the leading troops were loudly cheered . . ."

The nature of the Belgian obstacle at Gembloux, to which reference is made in the Gort Despatches, is not definitely described, but it would appear to have been this steel wall.

# A.T.S. GIRLS IN ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY

VERA CURRY, a former sales-girl in Swansea, in action at her gun site during the first engagement against raiders by members of the A.T.S.

PREDICTOR TEAM : left to right—Daphne Cook (of Lowestoft—waitress), Joan Neve (of Lewes—cashier), Jessie Coulton (of Lancashire—cook), Doris Bailey (of Devizes—nurse), Ruth Williamson (of Norfolk—cashier) and Joyce Williamson (of Norfolk—usherette)

left to right—Doris Lane (of Worcester), Evelyn Skinner (of Kent—shop assistant) and Florence Lawson (of Ripon—housemaid)—all at work on a height-finder

IRENE STARKEY (of Yorkshire—shop assistant) seated at a height-finder

Nancy Keen (of Kent—nurse) and Jean Blackmore (of Devon—machinist) working on an aircraft-identification instrument

EDITH BANKS (aged nineteen years—former housemaid) at work on a predictor at her gun site

When the air-raid Alert was sounded in London on November 1 (for the first time for many weeks), girls of the A.T.S. went into action. This was the first time that women took their places alongside men to help fight off the enemy raiders. The A.T.S. girls serve in the first anti-aircraft battery to fire at the London raiders. The guns were manned and fired by men ; the fire-control instruments, the plotting and detection devices were controlled by girls. These pictures show some of the members of the A.T.S. who took part in the operations on this historic occasion

# The BURMA of TO-DAY

*The Country whose Proximity to Indo-China and Singapore and Thailand Gives Her a Key Position in Far Eastern Strategy*

**THE PREMIER OF BURMA IN LONDON:** The Hon. U Saw came to London to confer with Mr. Amery at the India Office concerning Dominion status for Burma after the war: he has also seen the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers. With him in this picture is U Tin Tut; both are leaving the India Office after their interview with Mr. Amery

THE geographical position of Burma in the Far East brings her into the danger zone should Japan's far-reaching territorial ambition cause her to risk everything in conflict with Great Britain and the United States. It is at this precise moment that the Prime Minister of Burma chooses to pay a visit to England seeking a pledge for complete independence of Burma. He qualifies this request for full Dominion status with a clause that it is not to be applied till "after the war."

Burma at the present time is enjoying Home Rule, with control over all commerce, finance, and everything connected with internal affairs. This condition is of very recent date, for Burma was only separated from the Government of India within the last five years. The Burmese people have consequently had but a brief experience of constitutional government, which, of all forms of government, requires a long tuition. There is much to occupy them in the improvement and development of their country, so richly endowed with valuable minerals, such as iron, lead, copper and coal. As a symbol that Burma now holds her own place in the British Empire, she now possesses a new National flag, which was hoisted for the first time at Rangoon on March 31, with full ceremony, by the Governor. This flag bears a peacock upon the Blue Ensign. In a message sent by Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India and Burma, on this occasion, he stated that this ceremony was "a symbolic milestone on the road of Burma's progress as a member of the British Commonwealth." Until a few more milestones are passed, the British Governor of Burma retains authority over all matters concerning the defence of the country and of foreign affairs.

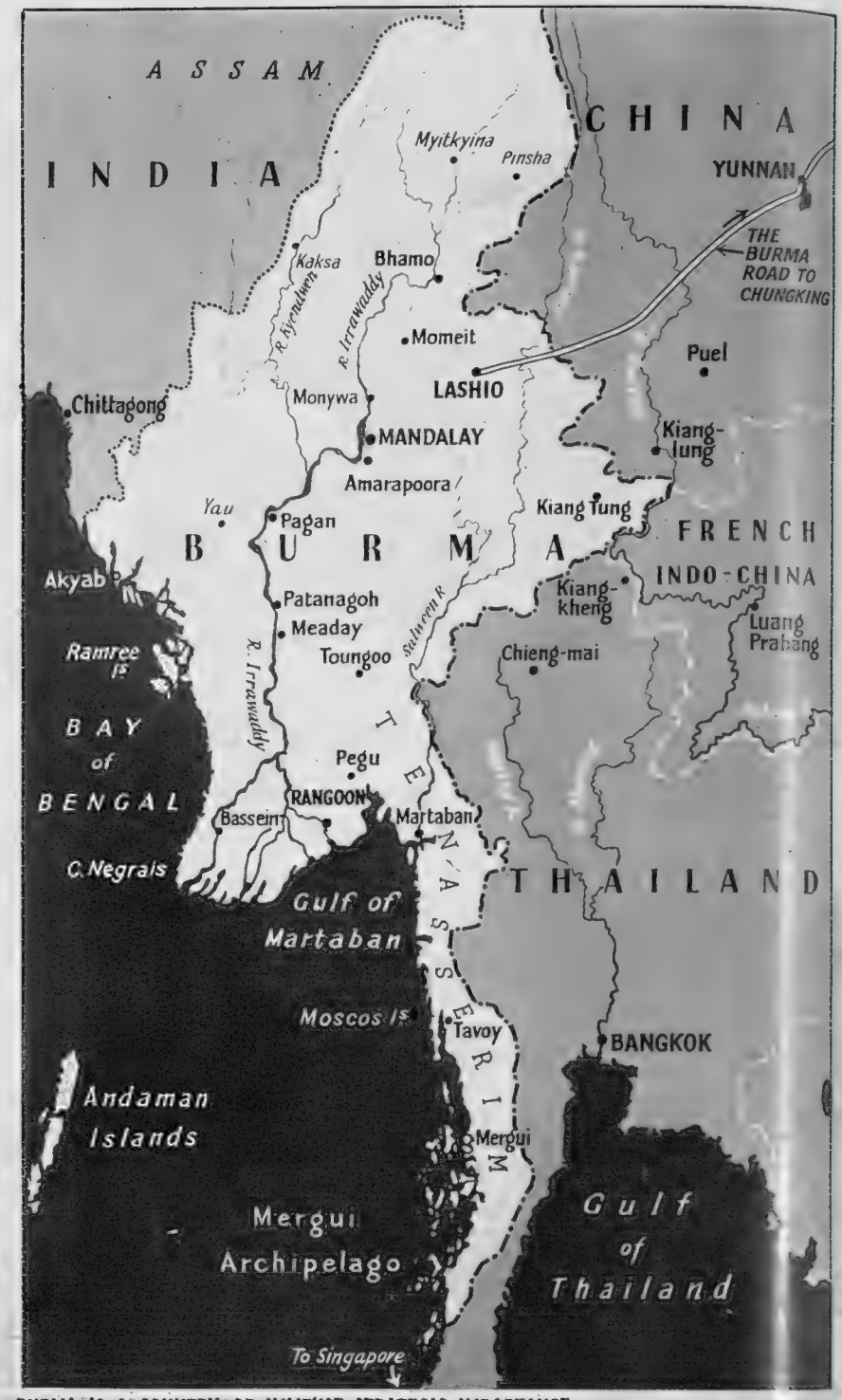
So far the constitution has worked very well. Burma is fortunate in having few of the racial and religious difficulties which have confronted the new Government of India. Though there are various races of people in the territory known as Burma, the Burmese are the most numerous, and their language is spoken, or generally understood, throughout the country. Among these different races are the Shans, Karens, Kachins, and Chins, who, though of varied origin, are culturally similar and are mostly of the Buddhist religion. The Shans, who occupy the northern portion, in two defined states, are at present under British rule.

The historical home of the Burmese people is the Irrawaddy Valley, with the district of Arakan as the cradle of the race, while the other races dwell more to the north and east.

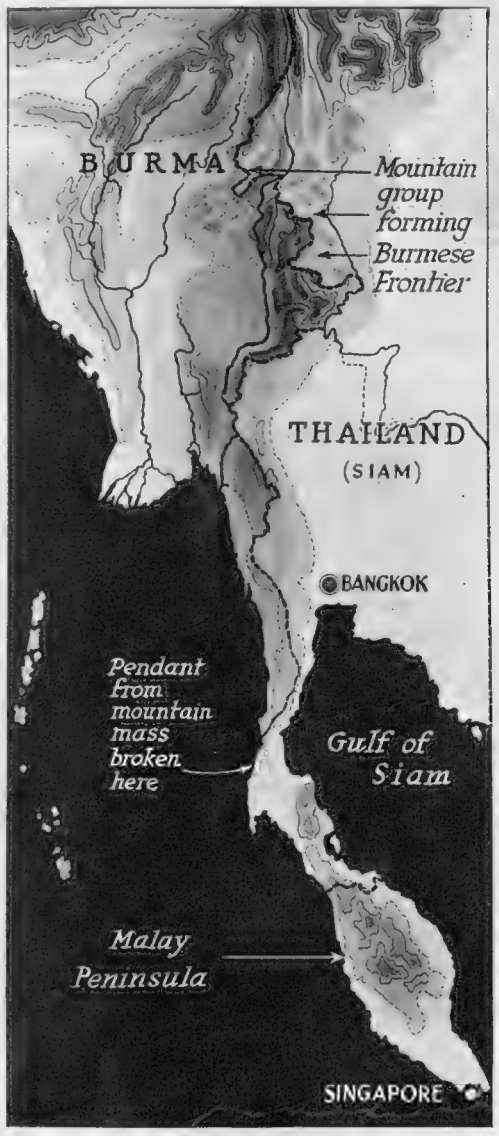
When the East India Company was ruling in India, Burma was an independent kingdom, with a long history, a record of constant warfare with her neighbours, of invasions from China, and of her own aggression. The Kings of Burma lived in Oriental splendour, dazzling the eyes of the emissaries sent by the Government of India on matters of trade. Their palaces, built of teak, liberally covered with gold and carving and ornamented with mirrors, gave an impression of great wealth and power. All over Burma are decaying ruins of this former splendour, for the Burmese monarchs had a predilection, on coming to the throne, of building an entirely new capital city, with palace complete, disastrous for the unhappy people who had to supply all labour free of cost. Arrogant and proud, the Burmese Court could not tolerate dealing with low-class traders, as they considered the East India Company, and contrived to heap every form of insult upon the representatives of the Company. This condition became so intolerable that war broke out in 1823, when Burma threatened Bengal, thinking herself vastly superior to anything the merchants could bring against them. Three wars were fought against the Burmese, in the first of which they lost Assam, and the third in 1885, when Burma itself was annexed. Under British rule, Burma enjoyed peace and prosperity undisturbed by wars or famines.

The great significance of the new road into China has brought Burma into prominence and added considerably to her wealth and importance. Huge quantities of goods are landed at Rangoon, conveyed by train to Lashio, in the north, which has become a great depot for the merchandise waiting for the lorries to carry it over the difficult route into China. But, at the same time, this Road is threatened by Japan and forces Burma to be ready for possible attack. She has many natural obstacles—mountains, jungles, deep rivers, and a rainy season which hinders all military effort. Aerodromes have been constructed from Lashio to Malaya, and American and British planes are ready for use.

The Burmese are an attractive race, they smile easily, and enjoy life as it comes, without great desire for accumulating wealth by vast energy and effort. All travellers notice the difference from the poverty of India to the cheerful well-being of Burma, where the dress, both of men and women, is charmingly simple and colourful. Many writers describe the Burmese people as having great latent qualities, with considerable courage and dignity, but lacking up till now a certain steadiness and sternness of purpose, which are necessary for the carrying out of all the processes of government. They display a democratic independence of manner which has curiously been evoked under their autocratic rulers, and all classes mix with one another with freedom in talk and manner. They still look back upon the great days when they ruled over a great part of Indo-China, and it is doubtless this memory which urges the Nationalist Party to gain complete independence, whereby they can enjoy the luxury of having legations in all the capitals of Europe and America.




**BURMA IS A COUNTRY OF IMMENSE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE:** In Far Eastern affairs, Burma is placed in a highly important position. To the east lie China, French Indo-China (now under Japanese influence) and Thailand; to the north lie India and Assam; and to the south is the Malayan Peninsula, with Singapore at its tip. Many rivers traverse the country from north to south; and along the Burma-Chinese frontier are mountain ranges which are difficult to traverse. By way of the famous Burma Road, which starts at Lashio, supplies reach Chungking for the provisioning of Chiang Kai Shek's force fighting against the Japanese




**THE MOUNTAIN MASS OF BURMA:** On the frontier, a mountain group extends southwards to the Gulf of Siam; it would prove a formidable barrier to invaders from the east. Right at the tip of the Malayan Peninsula is the British base of Singapore

# DEFENSIVE MEASURES IN BURMA

BREN-GUN CARRIERS BEING SWUNG ON TO THE RANGOON DOCKS: The defences of the country have recently been heavily strengthened by the arrival of new equipment

UNITS OF THE INDIAN ARMY NOW IN BURMA: Indian mounted infantry on the march along a road in the mountainous frontier region

BRITISH TOMMY-GUNNERS IN THE BURMESE JUNGLE: Men of a British regiment with Lease-and-Lend automatic guns from the United States

In view of the fact that for the first time Japan and the British Empire now share a common frontier as a result of the Japanese occupation of Indo-China, these pictures are particularly apposite. They are the first to be released of the British Forces in Burma, where the defences have recently been heavily strengthened by the arrival of new equipment in quantity—some of it from the United States under the Lease-and-Lend Act. In the frontier regions, lying to the east of Burma, the terrain is rugged, mountainous and jungle-covered. Wheeled transport is hopeless; consequently, Indian frontier methods would probably have to be employed in war

MARCHING OUT OF THE GATEWAY OF THE OLD FORT OF MANDALAY (one-time capital of Burma) is a company of the famous Burma Rifles, troops trained for typical mountain conditions on the frontier

TEXAS MULES CARRY BURMESE GUNS: An Indian mounted battery near the frontier carries its guns in sections on mules which come from Texas

GUNS FROM THE UNITED STATES, SOLDIERS FROM INDIA: Indian mountain-gunners inspect a Tommy-gun for the first time

**THE NEW TYPE UNITED STATES MERCHANTMAN, THE "SEA OTTER," which may be soon helping in the Battle of the Atlantic : This drawing shows the 80-ft. model with which the initial experiments have been made. (See notes below)**—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

# THE COMING OF THE "SEA OTTER"

## *The Cargo Vessel of Revolutionary Design and Construction for the Battle of the Atlantic*

THE drawing by Mr. Lambert, reproduced above, has been made from photographic material in THE SPHERE's possession. It shows an 80-ft. model of the new U.S. Sea Otter class of cargo-ship, concerning which the well-known American magazine *Time* has given the following details :

" Moored to a shipyard dock last week lay a cargo-vessel that may break the back of Adolf Hitler. She not only looked crazy—with a high-flanged bow, a low stern, only one turret-like house amidships, and five low hatches on her flush 270-ft. deck—but she broke most of the accepted rules of ship construction.

" She has no keel. She has no ordinary propeller-shaft. She has no costly marine engines. Fore and aft she is just a hollow shell for holding cargo. Her power-plant consists of sixteen 110-h.p. Chrysler gasoline engines geared in teams of four to four shafts that run straight down through her bottom to four 6-ft. propellers. In short, she is a ship designed to be built cheap, to be built fast, to be built in quantity out of common materials by men who have learned the elaborate skill of shipbuilding—a flivver of a ship to be turned out *en masse* to win the Battle of the Atlantic.

" This is the *Sea Otter*, built in little over a month by the U.S. Navy, and now awaiting her sea-trials.

" Her qualities are extraordinary. She displaces 2,240 tons, and has a cargo capacity of 1,600. But she draws only 11 ft. when fully loaded—which means that others like her may be built far from the sea. Instead of a crew of 25-30 men usually needed to run a ship of her size, she requires only 8 to 12. All hands live in the cylindrical turret amidships—live there for the entire voyage, for, with a free-board (when loaded) of only 9 ft., her decks will be awash in all but the calmest weather. Carrying some 37,000 gallons of gas, she has a cruising range of better than 7,000 miles, enough to take her to England and back without re-fuelling. If one of her 6-ft. propellers is fouled, it can be drawn through a well in her bottom to be repaired. If one of her motors burns out, another can quickly be bolted down to replace it (she carries four spares). Split neatly into eight watertight compartments, she is expected to remain afloat even if some of them are damaged.

" Only last February, two men thought up the *Sea Otter* over a luncheon-table in Washington. One was tall, balding Commander Hamilton V. Bryan (U.S.A., ret.), the other, white-thatched Warren Noble, an automotive engineer. Because automobile production was soon to be cut, they decided that their ship would utilise automobile instead of marine engines, should be constructed of the $\frac{1}{2}$-in. and $\frac{3}{8}$-in. steel ordinarily rolled out in abundance for the auto industry.

" Their first designs were no great shakes. Presently they were guided to famed yacht-designer William Starling Burgess. Burgess visualised an all-welded ship without a keel that would derive its strength from a series of 22-in. beams running lengthwise along its outer bottom. Going the whole hog in unorthodoxy, Burgess decided to put propellers amidships, plant all the housing in a central cylindrical section. With a workable design on paper, the trio took their idea to Secretary of the Navy Knox.

" But the experiment might have been a long time ripening had it not been for a Manhattan lawyer, Roland Livingston Redmund. Mr. Redmund, whose wife is a member of the Delano clan and first cousin of the President, was formerly counsel for the New York Stock Exchange. When the Navy could find no money to build an experimental ship, he put up the money out of his own pocket to build an 80-ft. model. The model was launched last spring, and did better in speed and performed better in rough seas than even its designers anticipated. Meanwhile, the idea had been put up to Franklin Roosevelt, who gave the nod.

" What the *Sea Otter* may mean in the Battle of the Atlantic can only be guessed. It is plenty fast enough for convoys (which run about 9 knots). Since it lies almost as low in the water as a submarine, and leaves no tell-tale ribbon of smoke, it will be hard for U-boats to spot if it travels alone.

" When Great Britain was shopping for small cargo ships recently, the cheapest bid she got was 1,000,000 dollars apiece. The first full-size *Sea Otter* cost about 250,000 dollars. Built in quantity, such ships will cost 100,000 dollars less. According to the original idea of the designers, they might be turned out in shoals, sent on one trip to Britain with cargo, and promptly scrapped there—their Chrysler engines going into trucks, their steel used in British steel mills. But the British have decided to keep the first 750 sent over for use as trawlers, etc.

" Another use has already been found for the flivver ships. Since their hollow bottoms can be used for oil as well as for other cargo, Harold Ickes wants ten to relieve the Atlantic seaboard oil-shortage."

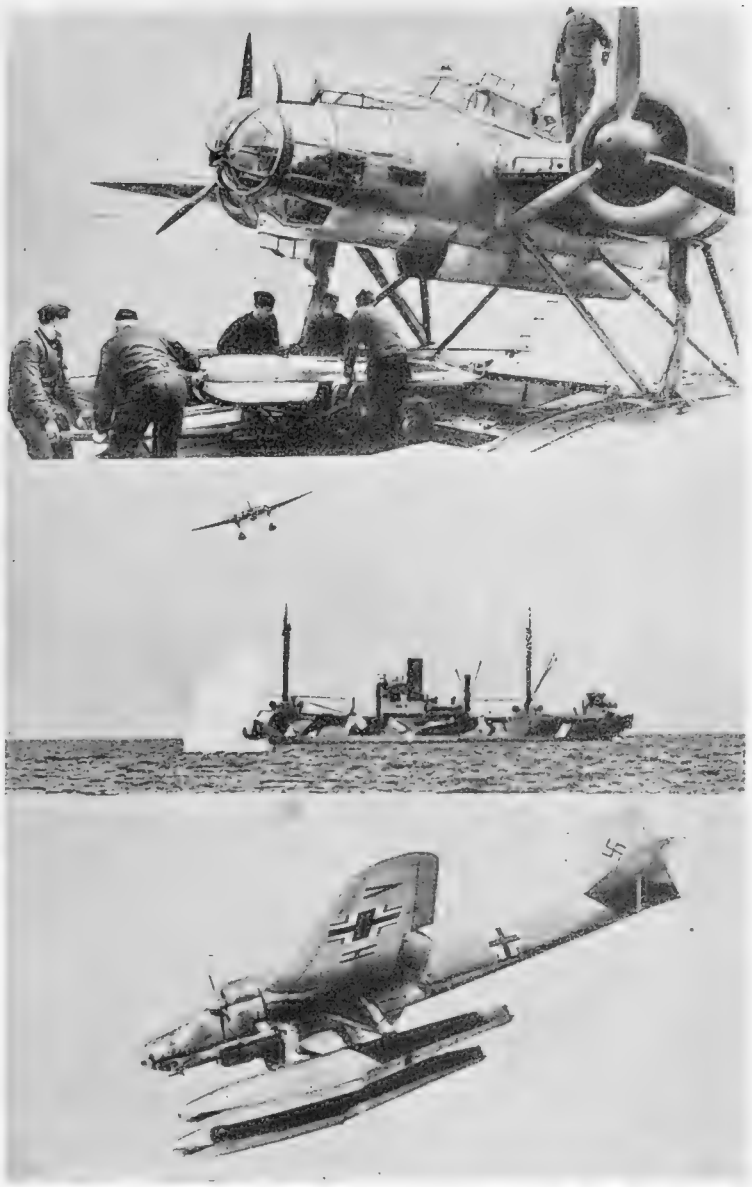
**A NEW PICTURE OF ONE OF OUR NEWEST AIRCRAFT-CARRIERS, H.M.S. "VICTORIOUS," one of the four vessels of the Illustrious class**

*Victorious* is a huge vessel of 23,000 tons displacement. She is 753 ft. in length, with a beam of 95 ft. and a draught of 24 ft. She has a complement of 1,600 men ; and she is armed with sixteen 4·5-in. dual-purpose guns. *Victorious* took part in the recent operations at Petsamo, and her aircraft also assisted in the pursuit of the *Bismarck*. Like all aircraft-carriers, she has a fine turn of speed—over 30 knots. Her sister-ship, *Illustrious*, it will be recalled, was damaged by bombers in the Mediterranean in January of this year. Nevertheless, she successfully reached Malta, and later Alexandria—despite further attacks by aircraft. She is now reported to be in a United States naval shipyard

# The "SEA OTTER" and a NEW TAILLESS AIRCRAFT

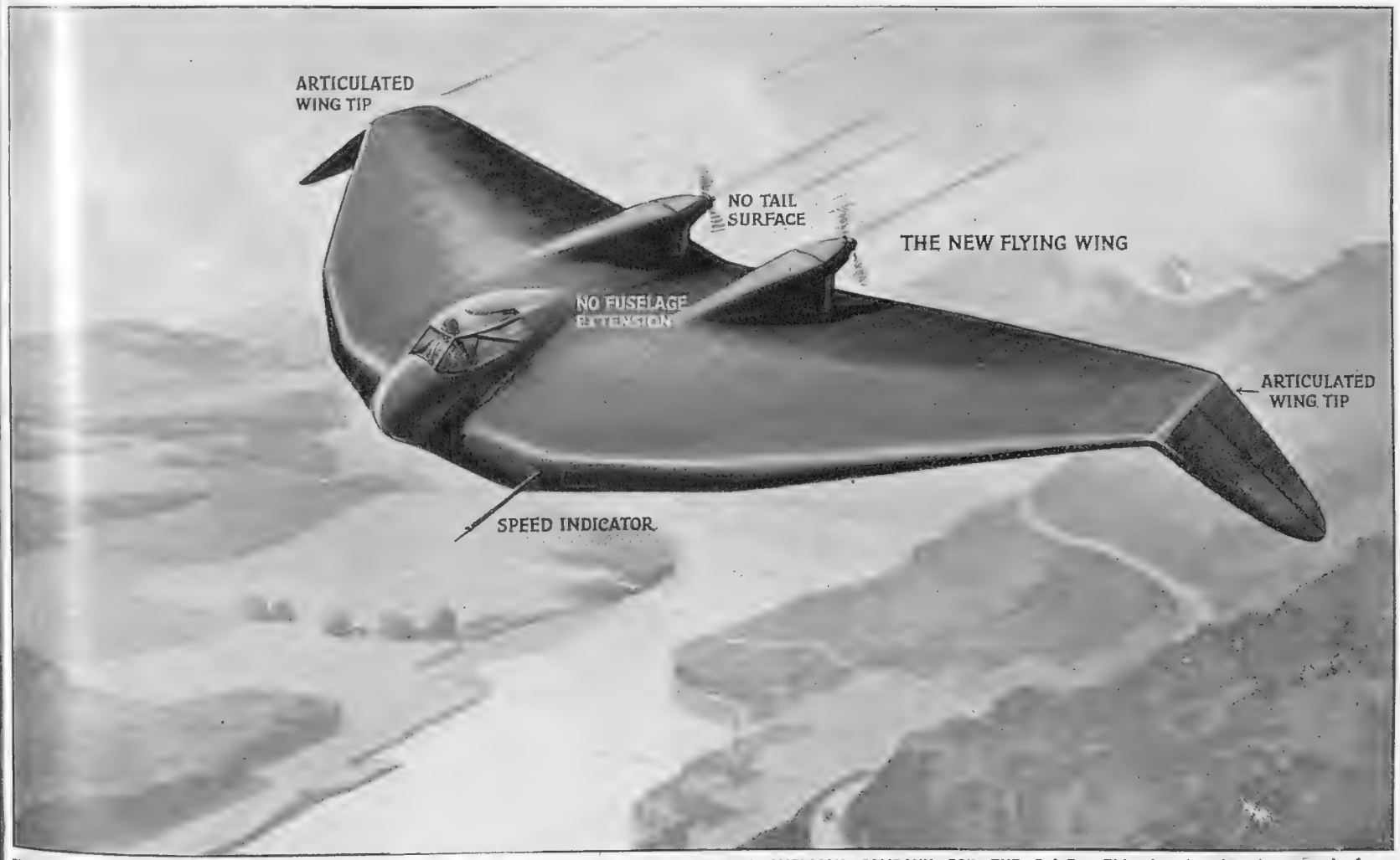
**A PLANE ACTUALLY BEING CATAPULTED FROM THE DECK OF A BATTLESHIP: A remarkable picture from the U.S.S. "North Carolina"**

Such a picture as that given above is very rare: it is only owing to the remarkable speed of the modern camera that it was secured by the American photographer. It shows the launching of a Naval aircraft by catapult from the deck of the United States battleship *North Carolina*, one of the most recent of the new capital ships of the U.S. Navy. The quaint-looking blobs in the foreground are the light caps of the crew of the battleship watching the performance. The catapult method of launching is a severe test of the pilot of the aircraft, for the action is so swift that he feels for a moment as if he had been hit with a sledge-hammer!



**GERMANY HAS NOW ADOPTED THE AERIAL TORPEDO IN THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, employing Heinkel 115's for the purpose. These three pictures show this type of aircraft and its method of attack**

*On right*—The aerial torpedo launched by seaplane is Germany's newest weapon in the Battle of the Atlantic. The success of this form of attack was first and brilliantly demonstrated by the British Fleet Air Arm in the Battles of Taranto and Matapan. One of the main reasons that Germany has changed over to air attack on these lines, is that aircraft can be built more easily than submarines, and their crews are easier to train. In order to deal with this new menace, our convoys are equipped with a powerful anti-aircraft barrage; planes catapulted from the decks of merchantmen are also being used. In the upper picture, a Heinkel 115 seaplane is being loaded up with its one torpedo, weighing 1,764 lb.; it is then seen swooping down for a low-level attack on a British vessel—the splash (according to the German description) being caused by the dropping torpedo; below, the Heinkel is seen returning to its home base



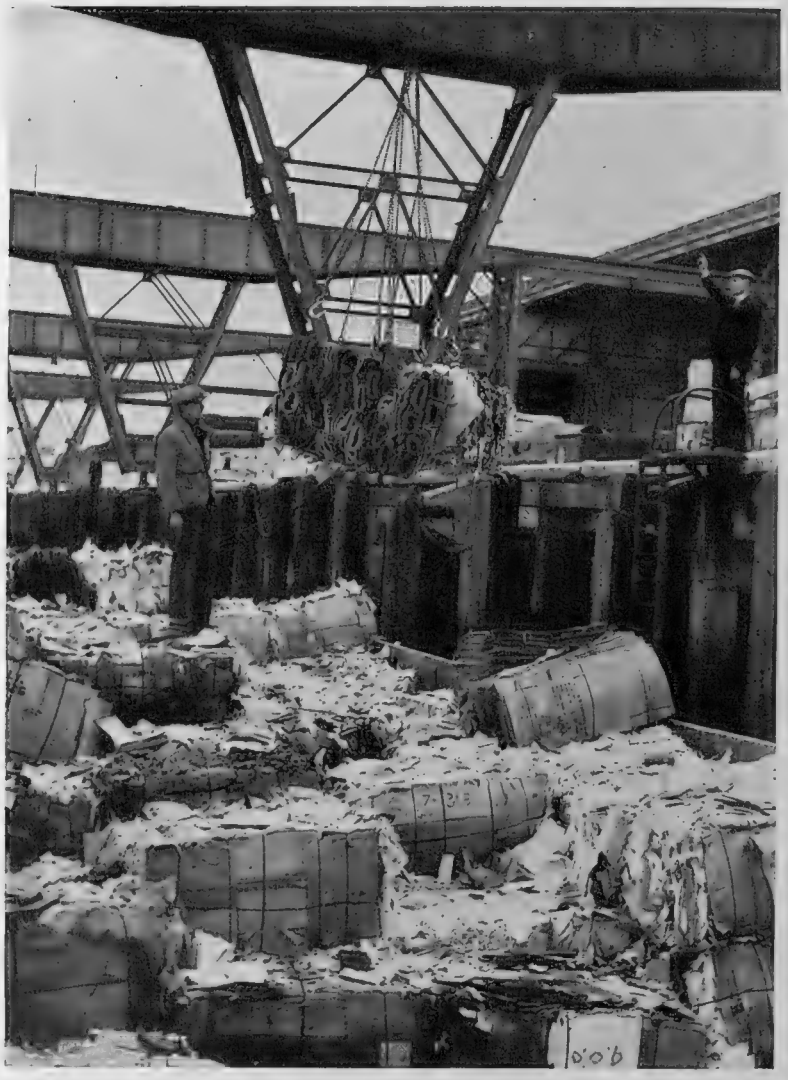

**THE NEW AND SECRET "FLYING WING" WHICH IT IS STATED IS BEING BUILT BY AN AMERICAN COMPANY FOR THE R.A.F.: This drawing has been made from photographic material, but its exact accuracy cannot at this moment be guaranteed**—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

The weird aircraft depicted by Mr. Roland Davies in the drawing above is not just a fantastic dream: it has actually been flown in the United States. It is a "Flying Wing" of entirely revolutionary design which has been developed by the Northrop Aircraft Company of Hawthorne, California, and which—so it is stated—is intended eventually for the R.A.F. The likelihood, is, however, that this aircraft has been designed solely for experimental purposes: it is known that Germany is experimenting along similar lines. The aeroplane has no fuselage and no tail; the absence of the latter reducing the drag and increasing the field of fire. The two Allison motors, with which the aircraft is powered, are buried in the wing, and operate the pusher propellers through shafts (somewhat like the Airacobra). The crew are likewise housed within the contours of the aerofoil. The undercarriage is of tricycle type. By cutting out all unnecessary excrescences, this Northrop fighter is reported to have a top speed of around 400 m.p.h. The aircraft is being tested in secret, and no details of performance have yet been released

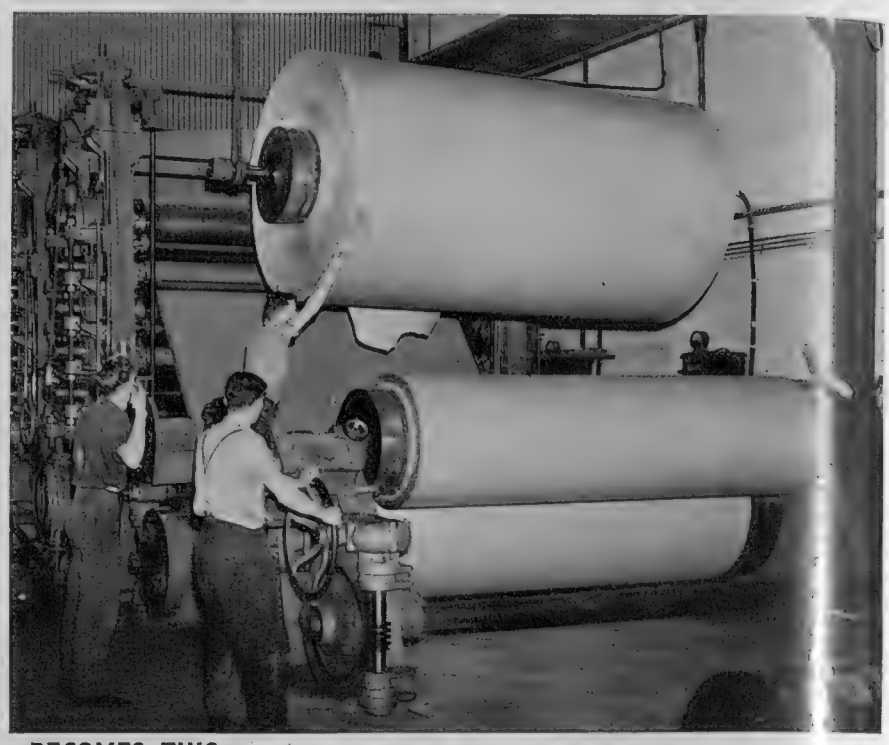
# A NEW ANGLE on PAPER SALVAGE

*This is One of the Most Urgent of War Tasks at the Present Moment. What can be Done in this Connection, and How the Country can Best be Served, is Here Discussed in Full*

By CHARLES GRAVES



**THIS—is a load of used cardboard shell-carriers arriving for repulping at a paper mill which works for the Ministry of Supply in the Home Counties**



**—BECOMES THIS—Rolls of cardboard manufactured from repulped paper, and used for making such things as cartridge-cases**

IT may seem a far, almost a far-fetched, cry from *Ruff's Guide to the Turf* or *Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday* to "ack-ack" gunfire. Lord Beaverbrook's demand for a minimum of 100,000 tons of waste paper and waste cardboard for munitions of war would sound a trifle incongruous if the Minister of State's reputation for practical warfare did not stand so high. Even as it is, the campaign needs some explanation—except, of course, to people who have shot game. For the container of a 12-bore cartridge is made of—what?

The big idea is now probably becoming apparent. . . .

The campaign for 100,000 tons of waste paper is of vital importance to this country. Incredulously at first, I have discovered that waste paper forms an integral part of our most devastating munitions of war. And by this one does not mean pamphlets—though pamphlets may ultimately prove to be more effective than shells themselves. Nor is it suggested that Great Britain is so hard up that she is about to fire compressed-cardboard or compressed-paper pellets at the opposition. The fact remains that waste paper, processed by scientific methods, forms an integral part of practical modern mechanised warfare.

You do not believe it? All right. One ton of mixed waste (including cardboard boxes, cartons and so forth) can be made into: cylindrical shell-containers, 1,500; gun fuses, 9,000; interior components for mines, 11,000; mortar shell-containers, 350; 25-pounder shell-cups, 47,000; boxes for ·303 cartridges, 47,000; aero-engine dust-covers, 71,000; cut-out targets, 36,000; boxes for aero-cannon shells, 3,000; cases for 2-pounder shells, 1,000; cases for 40-mm. shells, 6,000; washers, 140,000.

Few people can individually provide a ton of waste paper. Let us, therefore, break these statistics down to something more reasonable: 14 lb. of mixed waste paper will produce 30 tubes for mortar bomb-shells; or 8 aeroplane-cannon shells; or 430 machine-gun targets. I have just been weighing my London Telephone Directory. The two parts add up to exactly 8 lb. 7½ ozs.—an equivalent of 5 aeroplane-cannon shells, and over 20 tubes for mortar bomb-shells. (Let us forget the machine-gun targets; they are not offensive, and are therefore less interesting.)

Take an out-of-date *ABC* railway guide. It weighs 23 ozs. Ten *ABC* railway guides, therefore, will produce 8 aeroplane-cannon shells. Fighter-pilots fire bursts of 2 to 5 seconds in bringing down a Junkers 88. . . .

When the cartoonists made pleasant jokes about housewives proudly pointing to the destruction of an enemy bomber, and claiming that their aluminium saucepan was responsible, they were not necessarily exaggerating.

And, believe it or not, waste paper, in its own way, is as important to the national effort as aluminium. Great Britain is importing no waste. The newspapers are getting a limited number of tons of newsprint. This, together with imported wood-pulp and the reclamation of packages arriving under the Lease-and-Lend Bill, amounts to only 40,000 tons a year. The real trouble is that this country no longer possesses the wherewithal to make waste. Not only that, Great Britain is actually exporting paper and cardboard (as packages for munitions) to Russia and the Middle East.

It is well known, of course, that straw can be turned into board, but very few British mills are correctly equipped, and it would take many months to set up the necessary machinery.

Personally, I should have thought that the target of 100,000 tons of waste paper is by no means sufficient. One mill alone needs 1,000 tons of mixed waste above its quota per week. A sign of the times is that waste paper, which used to be sold at 30s. a ton, now secures anything from 6s. to 10s. a cwt. That is perhaps the most significant statistic of all.

There are 700 registered waste-paper merchants, approved by the Government, and ranging in importance from £1,000,000 companies to superior rag-and-bone merchants. In addition, there are 1,200 Boroughs and Local Councils collecting paper in this campaign. Their efforts so far have, however, not been geared up to wartime demands. As I write, the latest figures are not yet available; but the Salvage Department's statistics for August show that the tons of waste paper sold per county are pathetically low. If every county was as patriotic and systematic as Radnor, all might be well. The average amount of mixed waste collected and sold by the Local Authorities there in the one month averaged 32 cwt. per 1,000 of the population. By contrast, Montgomery, another Welsh county, could only show ½ ton, which works out at an average of ·7 cwt. per 1,000 of the population.

**LOADS OF SALVAGED PAPER ARRIVING AT THE MILLS FOR REPULPING: Do not think that your contribution is too small. It will help to swell the total effort, and help the country towards its first hundred thousand tons!**

**THE NURSES AT GUY'S HOSPITAL LEND A HAND:** Twelve tons of waste material were collected as the result of an intensive salvage hunt by nurses and doctors. Old ledgers and books helped to swell the total

To be constructive for a moment, here are 100 letters addressed to the Editor of a national newspaper "broken down." Fifteen criticise Government offices; 5 point out that Army camps make no attempt to salvage waste paper; 7 suggest that householders should have separate waste-paper bins to prevent the garbage being mixed up with the waste paper; 2 or 3 point out that evacuated shops and "blitzed" buildings contain any amount of waste paper; 4 or 5 point to the fact that in many cases owners of cinemas fail to collect the cartons of cigarettes and chocolate-boxes that are left strewn in the auditorium after the performance. Others stress the unnecessary use of paper by boxing-promoters' hand-outs and the unnecessary use of paper by patent-medicine concerns. Yet others inquire impatiently into the alleged idleness on the part of N.A.A.F.I. They say, with truth, that N.A.A.F.I. will put a package round as few as five biscuits.

Other critics have the temerity—perhaps justified—of blaming the Navy for throwing away waste paper at sea. One can be pretty sure that submarines are not so silly as to disclose their whereabouts by this practice, but still. . . . Indeed, it might be a good plan if the Waste Paper Recovery Association, Ltd., were to inform the captain of every ship in the Royal Navy of the addresses of the waste-paper merchants and collectors in every port in the kingdom. At the current rates (as I say, anything between 6s. and 10s. per cwt.), the dividend for selling mixed waste might be a useful income for comforts funds, as well as being a useful contribution to the war effort. In this case I am afraid that I have perhaps put the cart before the horse. But there is no doubt that the Royal Navy is inclined to throw overboard a great deal of seemingly unnecessary and useless cardboard cartons and waste paper which could be turned into money and, I repeat, assist the war effort.

Ask any Army officer to nominate his chief bugbear, and you can bet pounds to pennies that he will reply "Current Affairs." These lectures on current affairs need much improvisation and cause much deep thinking. I suggest that any Army officer who is short of a subject (after all, leadership is wearing pretty thin as the title for a lecture) might get himself out of trouble and help the war effort by delivering a lecture on the conservation of waste paper, and pointing out some of the statistics which I have already quoted. (I surrender all copyright.)

## EVERYONE CAN HELP

At present we have to import much of our paper requirements from across the Atlantic and 25,000 tons of shipping is thus employed. If we can collect this waste in this country, that tonnage can be diverted to carrying munitions to Russia.

Every class of waste is wanted—old periodicals, publications, back numbers, books, novels and sheet music. Old picture-postcards, Christmas cards, price lists, catalogues, almanacks and time-tables. Odd rolls of wallpaper, etc. Cardboard and other paper wrappings and packings are wanted, too—cardboard boxes, cartons, cigarette packets and anything else of this kind.

Every household has hoards of this useless, but now precious, war material. Housewives should have a glorious house-clean from cellar to attic, searching every drawer and cupboard and turning out every scrap of waste.

The bookshelves should be searched and sorted. They harbour worthless volumes which probably will never be read again, or even opened. A big tonnage can be obtained from old unwanted volumes.

The other day a private bank was able to provide no less than 1,200 tons of ledgers which had not been perused for over fifty years. The officer might go so far as to invite suggestions about this collection of waste paper. Soldiers who point out that greyhound race-track tickets and betting-slips, old income-tax receipts, show cards, cigarette cartons, labels and chocolate-box wrappings should be salvaged would presumably be commended for their ingenuity. N.C.O.s and men who suggested that salvage wardens for parishes, hamlets and streets should be appointed; that dumps should be arranged for the reception of salvaged material; that householders should be canvassed and urged to bring their materials to the depot or dump; that in large centres empty shops might be utilised as exhibition and reception depots, would get a good mark. Most of them, of course, would point to N.A.A.F.I.'s delinquencies, but still. . . .

The fact remains that neglected waste does two disservices to the country. On the one hand, it makes the building in which it is kept more vulnerable to incendiaries. It also deprives us of very genuinely important munitions of war.

If it were possible to describe Other Devices in any detail, it would be clear that this paper salvage helps to make an integral part of the Devices. This alone ought to act as a spur to everyone to collect more waste paper and cardboard. (I repeat that we are *not* firing paper pellets or cardboard shells at the enemy!) Even in the United States they are apparently collecting silver paper. A naval officer just back from New York bought a packet of twenty "Lucky Strikes" from a barman with a foreign accent. The barman took the silver paper from the package as he handed it over. The naval officer said:

"Why do you do that?"

"I am collecting it to send to Germany," was the strange reply.

The naval officer thought for a moment, and then said: "But how do you get it to Germany?"

"By the R.A.F., of course," said the barman, with a broad grin.

**ALL OUT OF WASTE PAPER: Girl workers with cardboard carriers for 4·5 shells and 2-in. mortars**—A picture taken at a paper board mill on the Thames where waste is converted into paper board required for an increasing number of war supplies

Here is some further data for any potential lecturer on the subject. The recent developments of the war in the Middle East and in the Battle of the Atlantic make it a matter of the utmost importance to recover for war production the maximum amount of waste paper and rags, both of which are genuinely required to supply our factories and mills. In places where there is a regular refuse collection, the salvage can be effected either by (*a*) alternate bins for refuse and for salvage, provided this can be done without creating a nuisance or serious risk to the public health; (*b*) providing separate receptacles in or on the collection vehicles (or by trailers).

**ON THE WAY TO THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND TONS: Barges laden with waste paper at the quayside at the mills awaiting unloading**

# OTHER THINGS THAN WAR . . .

## Truth and Hearsay; Calls and Callings; A Note on Blimps; and a Special Notice to Readers

**TRUTH AND HEARSAY.**—More than one correspondent of late has called my attention to the sometimes loose construction of the journalists' trusteeship—in the matter of sifting truth from rumour before building up a case for a protest or a reform. It is a true bill. Although in these days there is no lack of "sensations" to fill the very reduced number of daily columns, the war news is not always very red-hot and the reading public is spoilt for sensations through over-indulgence in that rich fare.

Nothing is easier than to cry "scandal" on slender proofs and local hearsay. Mrs. Brown's waste paper has not been collected for three months; ergo, the Government simply does not care to use the vast mass of paper in this island available for pulping. Mr. Jones' forty-years-old vegetable gardener has been called to the colours; ergo, the Government recklessly stultifies its own encouragement to grow more food at home. "There is no smoke without fire"—the saw has more than a spark of truth, but only a trained and very careful scientist can build a whole skeleton from observation of one tiny tibia. Neglect of Mrs. Brown's paper-sack and the call-up of Mr. Jones' gardener may be true bills, and, if so, these facts may indicate faults in the national organisation. But, first, they must be *proved*, and then they must be brought home to some link in a long chain, before a major charge of incompetence can be laid at the door of Whitehall.

One of the saddest features of the "halfpenny Press"—which accounts for my never reading it—is that shocking "scandals" are ventilated on Monday and totally forgotten on Tuesday, a sensational revelation of criminal incompetence is preferred on Wednesday and dropped like a hot coal on Thursday. Or, there is a red-hot and authoritative report of a British raid on the French Coast in Friday's issue (unconfirmed by any other newspaper). Saturday's issue contains no mention of the affair; no apology, no correction. It was just a "story" for a day devoid of news, and, as such, apparently justified in the Editor's easy conscience. That this is not a right conception of a journalist's trusteeship to the public, is recognised by respectable journalists in peace. And, if in peace, *a fortiori* in war.

The public pays pretty highly just now for its slim journal. In peacetime, it gets value (or, at any rate, quantity) for its penny. It is entitled to demand that its rationed columns should be filled with news which has some basis of authority and with "scandals" which are at least thought worthy of two (if not nine) days' wonder.

**The Call and the Calling.**—Wolfe, if history is not a lying jade, would rather have been the author of a sententious poem than conqueror of Canada. It is one of many instances—or at least may be so cited—of men who succeeded in one calling but felt a call for a totally different one. (By the way, what an outrageous thing it is that we should pronounce a word spelt *call* as *cawl*.)

Wolfe's case, of course, is founded on tradition only, and even his meaning, if he used the famous phrase, is uncertain. But there are many cases of men who, successful in one profession, genuinely hankered after success in another, not by way of hobby, but with all the professional's instinct and urge.

In rare cases, versatility and abnormal energy have enabled outstanding men to shine in more than one calling. Mr. Churchill, for instance. He rose to the top of the tree as statesman and as historian-biographer. He lays a shrewd brick, and for all I know may still go far as a painter.

The Italian craftsmen of the Renaissance doubled and trebled their roles, as goldsmiths, architects, painters and what not. Sheridan was a master of three arts; the historian Napier of two; Vanbrugh was a better architect than dramatist, but I believe he set more store by playwriting. Even Lord Grey "would rather have danced as well as Taglioni than pass Reform"—and, indeed, on the only occasion when his wife saw him tipsy, he tried to do so, tricked out in a red turban. I can collect half-a-dozen instances among men I have known who have succeeded in their professions, but genuinely hankered after success in one totally different, in one which, enjoyed merely as a hobby, could never satisfy their ambition. None will question the truth that the fullest happiness in life is enjoyed by those whose calling is their call, whose life's work is their true love and only love; the craftsman of the pre-machinery ages is the outstanding example. I am very sure that a parent who seeks to divert his young son from a calling which has stood the tests and winds of as many as three years continuously in boyhood is taking a terrible risk and gambling selfishly with his son's chances of a happy (if not of a successful) career. Indeed, it is wicked to obstruct a call, for it is the very negation of individual freedom. But it is worse than a crime, it is a blunder. A man will always travel farthest along the road he has chosen for himself, and when his heart propels his feet.

**Untapped Resources of Manpower.**—A lady writes to me: "Some weeks ago you drew attention to the 'over-fifties'—retired Majors and Colonels for whom no employment is apparently to be found. *Please* do so again." She writes from a well-known settlement of military men, and adds: "This place abounds with them, and when one thinks of the numbers there must be in Cheltenham, Bournemouth, etc., etc., it is almost staggering. They are most of them extremely hale and hearty. They play golf most mornings, and play bridge or go to the cinema in the afternoons and, in extreme cases, do *petit point* which can hardly be called war work. Of course, last week they all had to register for fire-watching, but there are not enough buildings to go round; and anyhow none of them would be much loss. And there are more than enough middle-aged retired civilians to man the A.R.P. services."

The solution springs to my mind—the Home Guard! But my correspondent (has she dipped her pen in caustic soda?) has an answer to that:—

"The Home Guard" (says she) "is considered quite ridiculous in a place like this by the old D.S.O.s and P.S.C.s, who protest that they are not going to be ordered about by that old fool so-and-so who never left England in the last war and would try to make them turn out in the evenings after dinner 'to listen to a d—d lecture by someone who don't know a tithe of what we have forgotten about war.' The Navy" (the lady concludes) "employs its dug-outs of over 50 and even 60; so why won't the Army?"

Clearly my correspondent's picture is one-sided. It is tinged with bitterness—a doleful picture. I hate to think of the same thing, but on a larger scale, at Cheltenham, Bournemouth, etc., and so much wasted talent among the hale and hearty Blimps. Can it be that the Army's failure to employ its dug-outs is due not to disregard of their existence, but to knowledge of their limitations? This is not my experience of dug-outs. Some of us, I confess, are not very safe driving cars in the black-out, but our Home Guard units are positively stiffened by our local Blimps, who humbly enough absorb crumbs of knowledge from babes in battledress and wear with something akin to shame their rows of ribbons, and are far prouder of their corporal's stripes. Still, *petit point* is not a direct contribution to our war effort, and there is still room in the Army for hale soldiers of 60 who are P.S.C. There is clear proof of that in the obscurity of many Army Council instructions which come snowing down on the Home Guard. I do sincerely agree that many of these experienced soldiers could be more usefully employed in Headquarters offices than in patrolling country lanes, watching for fire-bombs, or decorating fire-screens with worsted.

**To Readers of this "Feature."**—This page of writing was begun in a hurry when war broke out and it has gone on irrelevantly, but, I am glad to say, has achieved some measure of success by the only standard by which a journalist can judge success—that is, correspondence evoked from readers. Neither the Editor nor I am much in love with the present title of this feature, and I feel that a "new charter" and a new banner would help me to discourse on many topics remote from war with a greater measure of continuity and relevance, both of which would give me a better chance of deeper reflection before writing down my ideas. I therefore propound to readers of this page a plan to achieve these aims.

I propose in the course of the next few weeks to submit the "mixture as before" (but strengthened if possible under a new label) in the form of an "autobiography of ideas."

In my view the only form of autobiography worth reading is one which relies for interest on a man's harvest of experience in ideas, not on the names of places and persons with which he has been associated. I have lived now under five reigns and have half a century of experience common to ordinary men of my age, and (under some such title) I propose to marshal my memories from youth up and discourse on peaceful topics in some sort of chronological order—that is to say, readers will receive my memories of the Victorian era (and my theories thereon) before the Edwardian, and will hear my views and experiences of that notorious nine years' wonder—the reign of Edward VII—before we come to the Georgian age again. But those memories must inevitably be confined to the writer's own experiences—from what other source can any writer derive his matter?—and so the reader will really be receiving the same class of reading matter as at present.

The change proposed will help me to give better service—that is all. So I hope no reader will drop a black ball in the ballot-box. I think the rule must be that five black balls exclude the proposal!

J. G.

## THE THEATRE IN LONDON

By PHILIP PAGE

BY far the best of the recent importations from Russia (with the exception of the revival of *The Cherry Orchard*, a play written in Tsarist days) is Afinogenov's *Distant Point*, at the Westminster. This was received most favourably, and with ecstatic cheers, by a group of People's Conventionists, etc., present at the first performance. I am wondering whether these last would have been equally enthusiastic had it been written by, say, Lord Halifax or Commander Moore-Brabazon. However, "the play's the thing," and so far as this could be called a play at all, rather than a political discussion in Russian costume, it achieves its purpose. This seems to be the exposition of the pluck and determination of the Soviet Republic, and it is done with splendid sincerity. Moreover, since *Distant Point* was written several years ago, the author can pat himself on the back for his foresight as well as for his insight.

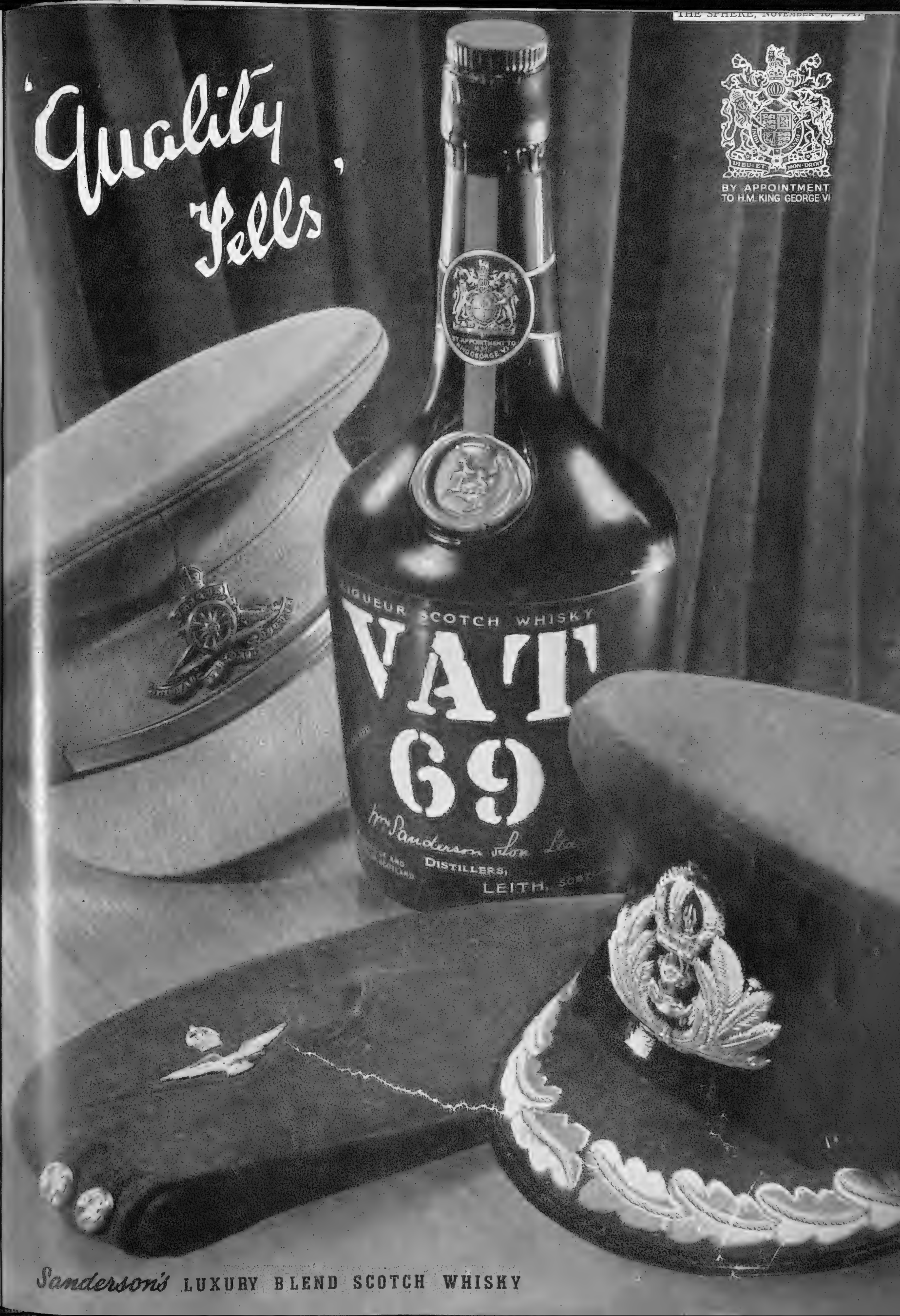
What little action there is concerns the breakdown of a train, containing a Soviet general, at a remote station on the Trans-Siberian Railway. It is a desolate spot, with a depressing atmosphere, and things are not made any livelier by (i) the announcement that the General is due to die of cancer in three months' time; and (ii) the occasional introduction of humour *à la Russe*, which I found to weigh heavy on the soul, perhaps because Russian fun, like certain wines of France, "does not travel." But the fault was not with those of the English cast concerned. Indeed, the acting, particularly that of Mr. Christopher Willard as the General, and Mr. Esmé Percy as an ex-priest with a whole host of grievances, was first-rate throughout.

*Other People's Houses* (Ambassadors).—Thoroughly English, on the other hand, is the fun of this farce-comedy by Lynne Dexter—as English as the habit it exposes and expounds of getting some fun out of uncomfortable calamities of wartime. True, this does not go to the length, as some wartime plays (all of them short-lived) have done, of showing an air raid in progress, scenes in shelters, and so on; and of even trying to be funny about it. The topical touches do not extend beyond evacuees from London in a country house, servant shortage, and arguments over the 'phone with the local grocer and butcher, together with lovers' squabbles and a married man running after a glamour girl (such matters are always topical). Miss Marie Löhr does not overdo the harassment and embarrassment of the lady of the house, though Miss Roberta Huby certainly does overdo the squirms and "refaned" tones of the suburban oomph-siren who is thrust upon her, perhaps because she has graduated rather too recently from revue. Miss Phyllis Dare, looking just as she did, and acting with the same charm, as in Edwardian days; Miss Renée Ray, very pretty and very clever as the daughter of the house; and Miss Esme Cannon, making a big first-night hit as a comically half-witted servant, all help a very merry little entertainment.

*Jupiter Laughs* (New).—The whole of the action of Dr. Cronin's play takes place, as might have been expected, in a nursing-home, and practically all its characters are either doctors or nurses. The first impression I formed was that I should hate to be treated by any of that rowdy, rickety-rackety crew of medicos—with one exception, beautifully played by Mr. Raymond Lovell. They were rude to each other throughout, the rudest being an alleged young genius, who knocked another doctor down and whose fiancée was blown to bits by T.N.T. when she went into his laboratory. I know nothing about medicine, but, like Rosa Dartle, I venture to ask the author (without hope of reply, since Dr. Cronin is safe in distant Hollywood)—for what ailments is T.N.T. prescribed?

## THE SHAFTESBURY HOMES AND "ARETHUSA" TRAINING SHIP

One morning, early in July, on arriving at Headquarters, the writer was arrested by a childish voice singing. Where did the sound come from? Ah! Some watchers from a landing window silently beckoned, and the picture presented would have melted the hardest heart with a longing to "give." The singer—a pale-faced boy of eight, pitifully thin and under-nourished—stood at an opposite window singing some lines of a popular song: "Rolling home. . . . I'm as happy as a king, believe me, as I go rolling home." The pathos of it can only be appreciated when the facts are known. The boy had travelled all night from a Yorkshire town, leaving all he had known of 'home" behind (that home deserted by father; mother a war worker, with no time to bestow care and attention on him) for another Home he was on his way to, and of which the representative of the British Legion who had recommended the case had written: 'The child seems very happy at the thought of coming." So he stood there, expressing his thoughts in the song as he wondered what his new home would be like. To-day he is "as happy as a king, believe me," as he spends his childhood days with others of his own age at the Society's Home for Little Boys. Won't you send a gift to help such children as this to be happy? Address your gift to Secretary, 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.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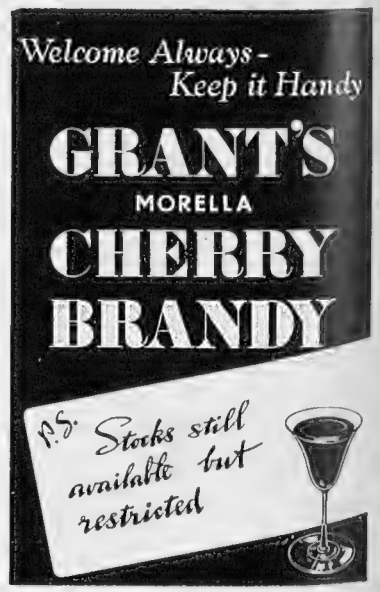

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THANKS to our gallant seamen — both Navy and Mercantile Marine — this country is not on "iron rations" in spite of all that the enemy has tried and is still trying to do.

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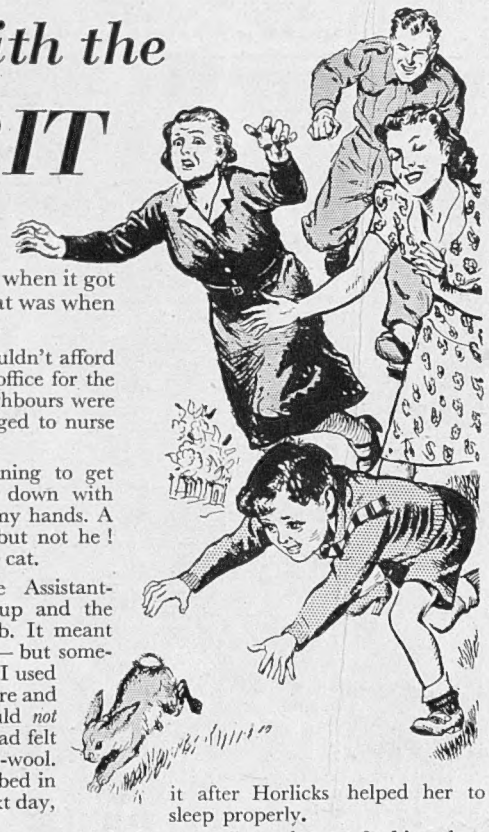

THE rabbit was a new pet of my young brother's. He was showing it to the family when it got away. We all chased it — and that was when mother fell and broke her leg.

It was a four months' job! We couldn't afford a nurse, so I stayed away from the office for the first fortnight and after that the neighbours were wonderful. With their help, I managed to nurse mother and run the house all right.

Then, just as mother was beginning to get better, that brother of mine went down with whooping cough and I had *him* on my hands. A normal child is subdued by illness but not he! Nursing *him* was like taming a wild cat.

Finally, to cap everything, the Assistant-Manager at the office was called up and the Chief asked me to take over his job. It meant more pay and of course I was glad — but somehow I didn't seem equal to the work. I used to take work home to do but it got more and more difficult to concentrate. I could *not* make the effort. Half the time my head felt as though it was stuffed with cotton-wool. Sometimes I'd give it up and go to bed in the hope that I'd feel different the next day, but I'd get up just as tired as ever.

At last mother persuaded me to speak to doctor about it. He knew I'd had a hard time, and I expected him to say I just needed a holiday. But he didn't. He said a person of my age ought to recover from any amount of hard work after a couple of good nights' sleep.

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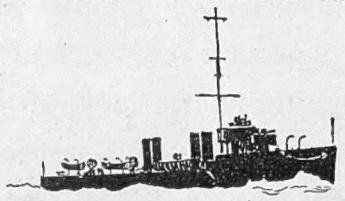

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